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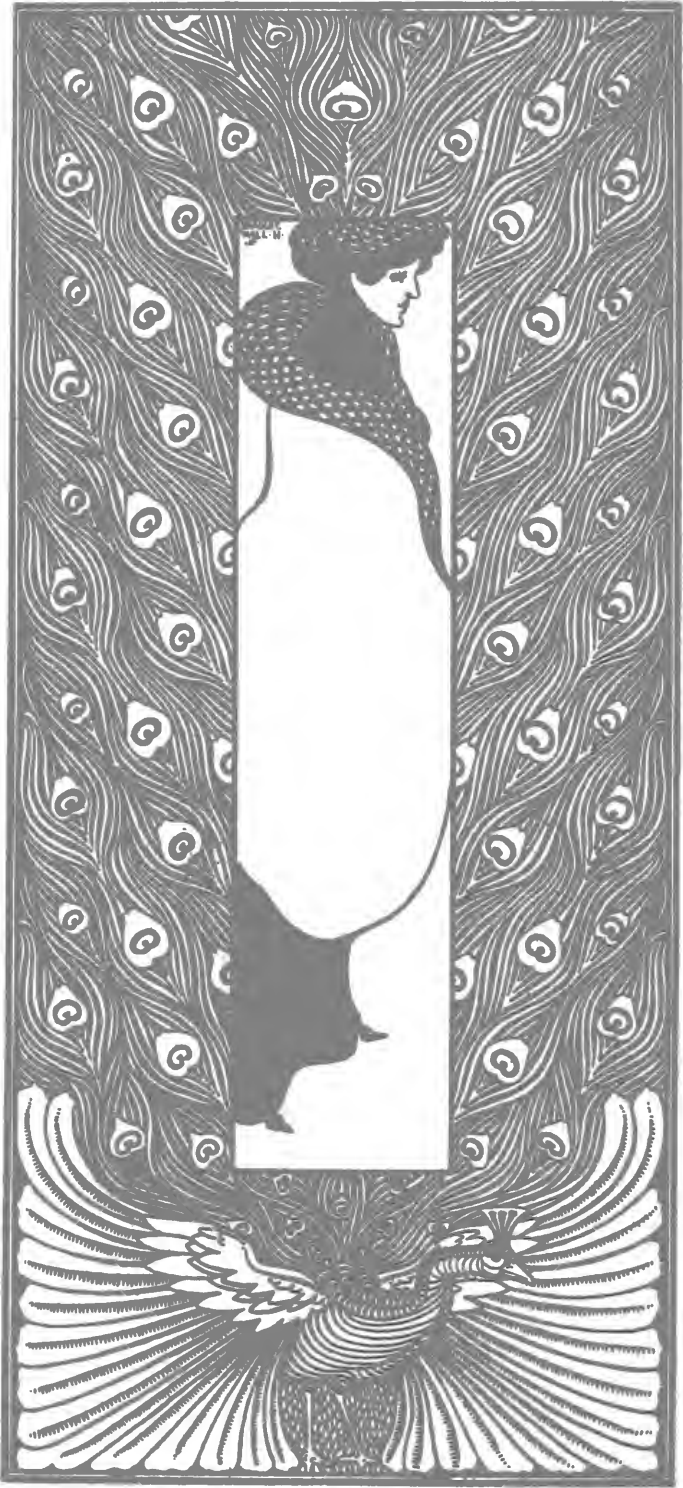
THE
MODERN
POSTER

OF this unique edition of THE MODERN POSTER there have been printed two hundred and fifty copies on Imperial Japan paper, numbered 1-250, and seven hundred and fifty on enameled book paper, numbered 251-1000, of which this is

NO. 395

With each copy of THE MODERN POSTER is given a poster by Will H. Bradley, of which there have been struck off only one thousand impressions, numbered 1-1000.

Copies 1, 2 and 3 are each accompanied by an extra set of the illustrations, printed by hand, on light Japan paper, mounted, and in a portfolio.



THE MODERN POSTER

DESIGN OF WILLIAM BRADLEY

"THE MODERN POSTER"

DESIGN OF WILL H. BRADLEY

104

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THE MODERN POSTER

BY ARSÈNE ALEXANDRE
M. H. SPIELMANN
H. C. BUNNER AND
AUGUST JACCACI



PUBLISHED IN
NEW YORK BY
CHARLES SCRIB-
NER'S SONS MDCCCXCV

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ALEXANDRE
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I

FRENCH POSTERS
AND
BOOK-COVERS

ARSÈNE ALEXANDRE



FORAIN, DEL.

EXHIBITION POSTER



It must be confessed that, *French Posters
and
Book-Covers*

until within the last ten or twelve years, the book, now become so frankly coquettish in its costume, was rather carelessly dressed. On its frock of gray, yellow, blue, or pink paper—with even these tints neutral and subdued—were to be read the names of the author of the work and of the publisher, and that was all. Even this was an improvement on the primitive periods where the unbound book was simply re-covered with a sheet of plain or marbled paper, with a mean little label pasted on the back. I am only speaking, of course, of the current book, the popular book, the book which is bought to be read. It was only rarely that a modest vignette was printed on its cover; a thin, black vignette, doomed to disappear before the binder's shears.

But it is not for nothing that we live in the age of advertising, and under the reign of the *ad captandum*. There came to be publishers—crafty publishers—who said to themselves that a book might be so made as to be its own ad-

vertiser. It sported the most brilliant colors like a mountebank on parade; it made its bid from the window of the bookshop and threw dust in the eyes of the credulous passer-by. Enclosed back and front between two designs, harmonious where it was possible, violently contrasted where harmony was not sufficient, the book became its own sandwich-man. The substance was inside, and the advertisement wrapped it as the silver coating wraps the pill. Thus the lie was given to an old French proverb which has been made to suffer countless persecutions, "À bon vin pas d'enseigne."

But heaven forbid that I should say anything derogatory of advertising, which is a necessity of our day and the very soul of business, especially in bookselling. I am only affirming that, though the cover of the book may have become an adornment, it was at all events at first an *affiche*. This is proved by the fact that book-lovers were not at once persuaded that such covers ought to be preserved. It was only some little time after the fashion became general among the publishers that it became a custom to keep the cover

under the binding, and that it thus became a permanent evidence of the taste of our epoch—good or bad, as the future may decide.

Another proof that it was rather a desire for advertising than an artistic intention which controlled the illustration of book-covers is that often the more insignificant and commonplace the book, the “louder” was the cover. There have been books which have been seized and persecuted by law on the evidence of too loud a cover ; but generally, if the cover was very risky it was safe to conclude that the inside was extremely prosy, not to say drowsy. It was like a circus booth, where the posters promise you the most exciting spectacles, and where the deluded spectators, once having entered, find nothing to look at for their two sous but a melancholy old monkey, or a seal uncomfortably confined in a tank which very imperfectly recalls the boundless ocean.

Whatever its cause, the vogue of the illustrated cover was started, somewhere about ten years ago, by a true artist—one of the most original and subtile of his time, indeed—Jules Ché-



PRIX :
3 fr. 50

FÉLIX DUBOIS

Le Péril Anarchiste

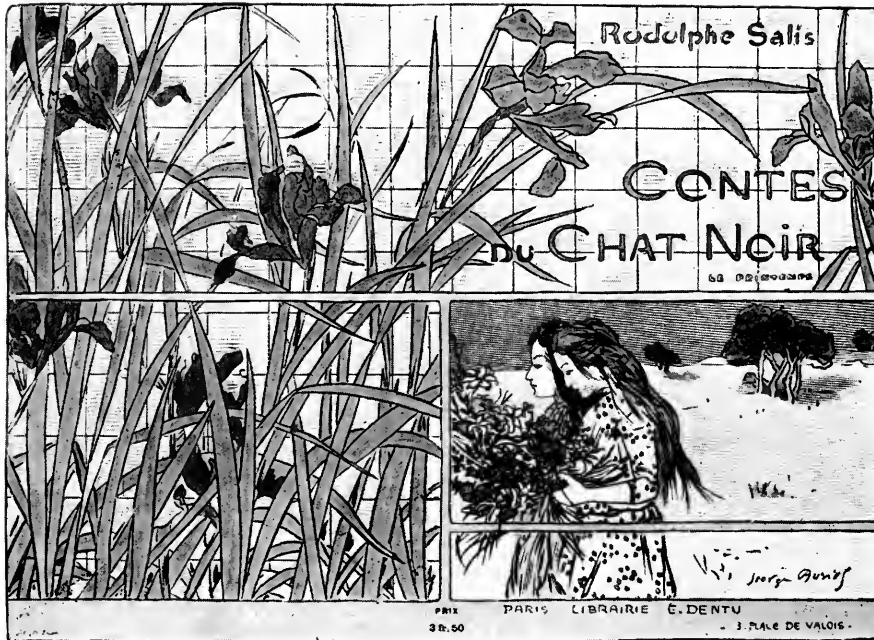


70 Illustrations et Documents.

E. FLAMMARION, PUBLISHER.

BOOK-COVER, FRONT AND BACK

ret. And this was the way of it: Chéret was already known for his superb posters, which were sought by all collectors, and which were to be seen as wall ornaments in almost every painter's and sculptor's studio. There was extant at this same time an energetic, amusing, and odd personage—very well known to the youngsters among the artists and *littérateurs*—named Jules Lévy, whose name makes it unnecessary to say that he had considerable business faculty. He had a fairly important position in the celebrated publishing house of Hachette, but



GEORGES AURIOL, DEL. G. DENTU, PUBLISHER.

BOOK-COVER, FRONT AND BACK

he was ambitious to set up a business on his own account. You can imagine that the house of Hachette, with its character and its class of publications, has commonly had rather a serious staff of employees, like the staff of a ministry or at least the membership of the Institute. All the same, there have been at least two exceptions to the rule, who turned out badly, one M. Émile Zola, and the other this Jules Lévy.

It was Jules Lévy who virtually invented the artistic-literary sect of the Incohérents; and in their exhibitions and balls he stirred up his associates to

work out the most reckless notions their brains devised. In the exhibitions of the Incohérents were to be seen the most extraordinary *charges d'atelier*, and at their balls the most astounding costumes and performances. This remarkable Jules Lévy, with his long legs, his long arms, his big ears, his broad mouth, and his long nose, as soon as he found himself in possession of a sufficient celebrity, carried out his dream and established himself as a publisher. It was then that he noticed the analogy between the colored poster and the possible cover of the book of the future. He knew Chéret and his work, and he it was who first appealed to the designer of posters to cover and ornament the books he published. At first this was a little too much of a novelty, and Jules Lévy came to grief over it. His idea, which had been as simple as Christopher Columbus's egg, made him no money ; and when he had to shut up his shop other publishers did not at once begin to decorate their publications. They came to it a little later, and timidly at first, but after a while with an actual craze, and there was for a time and still is, as I have said, a large

JEAN DARCY

Le Voyage de la Princesse Louli



PARIS — PAUL OLLENDORFF, ÉDITEUR

—
1894

DAGNAN-BOUVERET, DEL.

BOOK-COVER

quantity of books whose sole reason for being was in their cover, and whose cover itself was a “fake.”

On the other hand, it must be admitted that if the flag of illustration did

not always cover a good cargo, and if to some extent it favored the launching of very commonplace performances, it made perhaps an additional opportunity of refinement for a truly beautiful book. Besides it has given us some very pretty prints, the work of our best artists, which, when struck off by themselves, are a pleasure to collectors.

Nearly all the celebrated painters have been approached by publishers, so that it would be invidious to cite the names of the Salon medallists and others who have adorned with a fleurette, a portrait, or a scene the front cover of a book. Among the illustrations of this article there is, for example, a graceful female head signed Dagnan-Bouveret. This enigmatical and elegant person is the author herself of "*Le Voyage de la Princess Louli*," Mme. Charles Laurent, the wife of a very well known journalist. In the same way, the Sar Joseph Péladan sometimes has his books modestly adorned with a drawing by Séon, depicting his own magian's face, with eyes the Greeks would have called "*Boöpis*," and his jovian hair, like the beard of the colossus of Korsabad.

But if I must mention the real masters



J • CHÉRET, DEL. PAUL OLLENDORF, PUBLISHER.

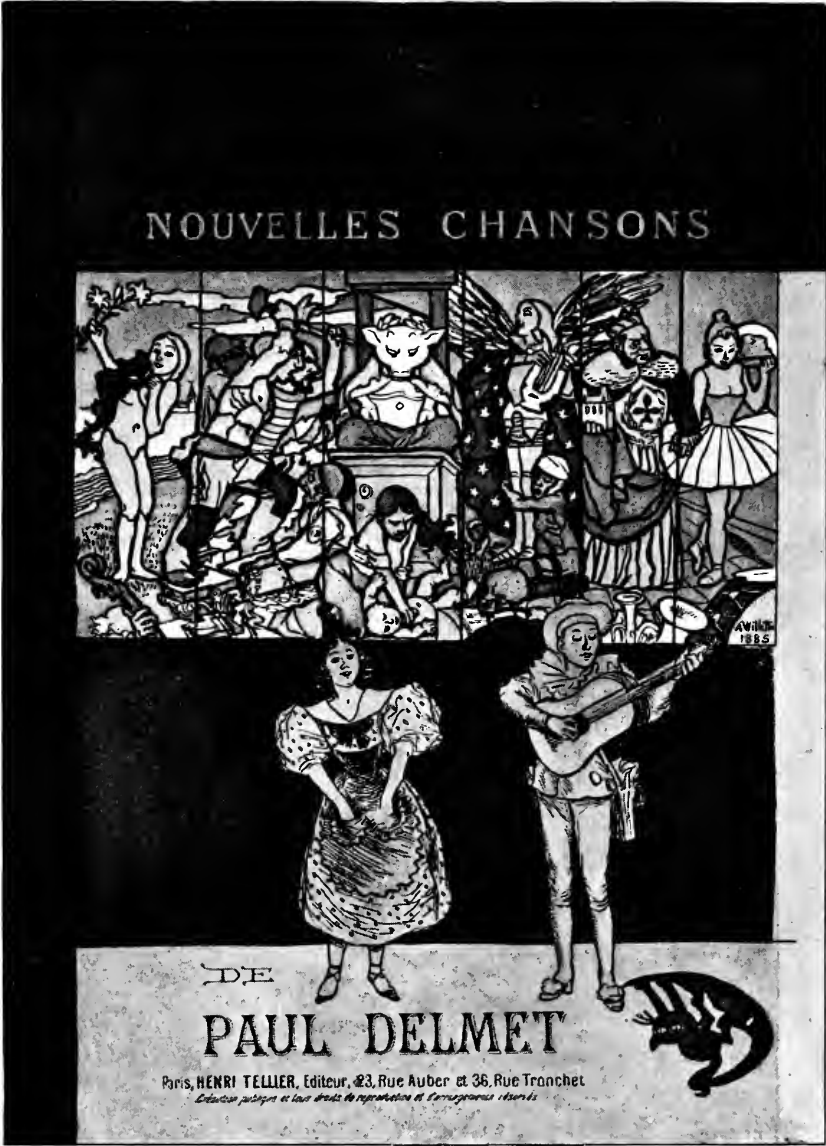
BOOK-COVER, FRONT AND BACK

of cover-design in colors up to the present time, let us pause especially at the names of Grasset, Chéret, Willette, and Georges Auriol. Grasset has signed some covers for stories and important publications, in which his forceful and somewhat severe manner appears distinctly. As to Chéret, the case is somewhat peculiar. Since the time when he worked for Jules Lévy, he has furnished covers more particularly for the works of his friends among men of letters, or of occasional unfortunate writers who have justly thought that one of his sparkling chromo-lithographs would be an attraction, and consequently a cause of increased sale. He has tired of his posters and that sort of work generally, and is devoting himself more and more to pastel and decorative painting, which he loves enthusiastically. Nowadays, therefore, he almost always begins by finding some pretext to refuse a request. He has urgent work on hand for three months ; he hasn't a minute to himself ; in three or four months he will see, etc. ; but his friend returns to the charge : " Poor so-and-so has a sick wife and children. One of your covers would make his book sell ;" and Chéret surren-

ders on the spot, bites his mustache, makes an effort to conceal his emotion, and finally says : "Oh, well, let so-and-so come in again in a fortnight, and his cover will be done."

But with Willette, who has published some of the most brilliant and elegant book decorations, it is quite another tune ! If you can wait a year or two, perhaps you shall have your cover. But don't try to get it for any offer of money, if the book and its author do not please this capricious Pierrot. If your idea has attracted him, as did Jules Jouy's "Chansons de Bataille," or the present author's "L'Art du Rire," it need not be two years, nor one year, nor even a fortnight that you must wait. Some fine day, or rather fine night, he will set himself to work, and in the morning he will bring you the drawing for the same price that Chéret charges—that is to say for 0 francs, 00 centimes. Thus the poor chiefly enjoy Chéret's favors, and the independent those of Willette ; or rather the poor and the independent secure from both of them things which millionaires or academicians would beg in vain.

Georges Auriol, the third of those I



A. WILLETTE, DEL. HENRI TELLIER, PUBLISHER.

MUSIC-BOOK COVER

named, has made a special place for himself by covers in which flowers, which he understands thoroughly, play the principal part in the decoration. There are very pretty covers, too, by Steinlen, Caran d'Ache, Toulouse-Lautrec, and others. And finally the Décadents and the Symbolists have made a specialty of singular covers with apparitions, cabalistic signs, symbols of mourning, or treatment in pure white, which are a mixture of subtlety and puerility—but very amusing all the same as a sign of the times.

I hardly know what to say (to finish this part of my essay) is likely to be the future of cover illustration. But one thing is notable, and that is, that already certain publishers have found an opportunity to distinguish themselves by a novelty—by returning to covers that are entirely plain! Such are the caprices of fashion! Books and women are going back to the simple *batiste* of our grandmothers—and with the same motive—coquetry!

If we turn to the covers of songs, pieces of music, and scores, and to the posters of the music publishers, we shall find a slightly different state of

things. In the first place the cover-illustration of musical compositions is of much older date than that of books, and of a certain luxury and breadth. The *romançe* of the good old times—say of Louis Philippe—and the quadrilles our grandfathers danced, were almost always ornamented with lithographs (in black and white only, it is true). Some were of an audacious *naïveté*, and provoke a smile nowadays, by the fidelity with which they preserve the costumes, tastes, and elegances of the period—especially their absurdities. What crinolines and alpine shepherdesses, what heart-conquering lancers, what superb gentlemen with long side-whiskers and watch-charms, what lovely sentimental beings with bands and ringlets! But there were masterpieces of romantic art, too, decorating simple *contredanses*; I need only recall the admirable lithographs by Célestin Nanteuil, which bring very high prices to-day. Many well-known artists signed (or drew without their signature) covers for songs: Daumier, Gavarni, Millet, Daubigny, Français, Ribot, and others. This decoration, therefore, is in no sense a novelty, and I should not

dwell on it further, if there were not two rather important points to be noticed in connection with it.

One is, that of late years the attempt has been made to make true symphonies of music and painting, by securing a certain fitness in the choice of composer and illustrator relatively to one another. Thus Grasset, who is especially learned in old legend and archaic art, was asked to make the covers and posters for the works of Wagner, or for scores filled with the languors of the Orient. So, too, M. Besnard began the illustration of Beaudelaire's "Fleurs du Mal," set to music by M. G. Charpentier. One



publisher, M. Biardot, went farther than his fellows, and had Willette illustrate, incident by incident, and almost phrase by phrase, the score of "L'Enfant prodigue." It was a *tour de force* and a bold venture, but in spite of its success the example has not been followed, perhaps from fear of being thought merely imitative. Still it is not unusual to find short musical *fantasie* diversified by scenes and sketches; and it will always be possible to make dainty little things of this sort when a bright composer and a *spirituel* draughtsman can be brought into collaboration. Some of the best experiments of the kind have been made by the firms of Hengel and Hartmann. Indeed, musical compositions, and especially the dramatic situations of the great operas, seem made to suggest pictures to a painter, like those with which "Lohengrin" and "Tannhäuser" have inspired Georges Rochegrosse (published by Durand & Schoenewerk), or the "Valkyrie" Grasset. As for songs, we shall easily find among these the names of our customary illustrators, *i. e.*, Willette, Auriant, Chéret, Steinlen, etc.

The second point is that art—and

real art—has for a short time past been made to do duty in setting off the repertory of songs of the most vulgar order—the repertory of the *cafés-concerts*, to call it by its right name. Is this a sign of the times, and a proof that art is growing democratic, or democracy ar-

tistic, or neither? At all events, a sign of the times. The vulgar song of the *beuglant*, the absurdity made fashionable by some variety actor with a momentary vogue, the ridiculous nonsense in which rhyme and reason are both conspicuous by their absence, or even the suggestive song, all these have nowadays the most artistic dresses, attractive masks covering deceptive faces.



ORAZI, DEL. DELANCHY, ANCOURT & CO., PUBLISHERS. THEATRICAL POSTER



JULES CHÉRET, DEL.

EXHIBITION POSTER

But there is, after all, no reason to fear too greatly this vulgarization of pictorial art ; if refined painting has taken a few steps toward a meeting with the poetry of the gutter, the poetry of the *café-concert* is itself tending toward a greater refinement and a true literary note, or what promises to become so.

It would need a considerable digres-

sion to show how certain little conclaves of poets and fantastics, like the *Chat noir*, the best known of all, have played the part of intermediaries between poetry worthy of the name—the poetry of those who are at least capable of originality, rhythm, and orthography—and poetry unworthy of the name, the more or less metrical platitude which has prevailed in the Parisian music-halls. It is enough to refer to this tendency, which perhaps deserves a more detailed study. Certainly, at the rate we are going on, if Alfred de Musset and Eugène Delacroix were still alive, they would be working for the *café-concert* in a few years. Alfred de Musset would write songs for Yvette Guilbert, and Eugène Delacroix would make a beautiful cover for them. Lamartine himself would perhaps write a sentimental piece to be spoken and “represented” by Mme. Judic, and the publisher would go fearlessly to ask M. Ingres for a cover-design. We are clearly not far from such a state of things when writers and artists—some of the most highly esteemed among them—are little by little finding their way to the music-halls, where there is success and money.

Real artistic originality in the covers of music-hall songs began through the efforts of a publisher named G. Ondet, one of whose publications was, for instance, *Les Montmartroises*, words by M. Gondezki, one of the most audacious of the *Chat noir* song-writers, and with a lithograph in color by G. de Feure, a young Montmartre painter of Dutch birth—a man of vigorous if rather morbid talent. Ondet took a large risk in making this innovation (at first in connection with covers by M. H. G. Ibels), and for awhile his songs found no sale; but he persevered (luckier than Jules Lévy, whose story I told above), and thanks to Ibels, Steinlen, and Toulouse-Lautrec, his usual illustrators, he succeeded in setting this fashion for the publication of cheap music. To be quite exact, I ought to say that even before him Bruant, the song-writer of the Outer Boulevards had had his songs illustrated by Steinlen; but this was quite an isolated experiment.

There remains to be considered one final form of the poster, in its relations to artistic undertakings—that is, the poster designed for exhibitions, and es-

pecially for art exhibitions, general and individual.

The poster-mania is a comparatively new disease—an excellent disease, by the way, for it furnishes material for some rich and curious collections; and one which has brought into being a whole branch of commerce and industry far from unimportant. In former days a few posters by E. Delacroix, Nanteuil, Daumier, Gavarni, Henri Monnier, and later Manet, made up the whole of this branch of art, and these few could be kept by a print-collector in a small portfolio. Then Chéret appeared. He produced hundreds of posters that were eagerly collected, especially as they were not very easily secured. Then



everybody began, not only to collect posters, but to make them ; every painter was ambitious to be a Chéret—but *non licet omnibus*.

The successive stages of this commerce in posters are interesting to note. When the first works of this kind appeared upon the walls, the novelty-lovers began their campaign. How could these mural frescos be secured ? To peel them off the walls one's self, at night, seemed the simplest plan, but it was also the most dangerous. It involved the risk of being caught in the act, taken to the police station and soundly fined, to say nothing of the risk of "peeling" them badly and getting off the wall only a thing of tatters. It became necessary, then, to secure the complicity of an all-powerful personage—the bill-poster. How many great collectors, honorable and honored men, rich and well placed in life, have bowed down before His Majesty the Bill-poster ! The paster of posters, realizing a sum which varied with the importance of the vogue of the matter in hand, came to deserve the name of the *un*-paster of posters. That was the primitive period, the stone age, of

poster - collectors.

The bronze age began when one or two print-sellers in the neighborhood of the quais arranged with the bill-posters for a few copies which they sold to their customers. But there were suits brought by the printers and artists, and sentences pronounced; for the courts would not admit that the interest of art gave the right to dispose in this way of merchandise which did not belong to the sellers. And thus by severe lessons, was ushered in the golden age in which we live.

The print-sellers, driven by the growing flood of demand, finally decided that it was worth while to arrange with the proprietors of the posters themselves,



that a part of each printing should be reserved for amateurs; and so the commerce in posters became a real profession, which dealers like Messrs. Kleinmann & Gagot practise on a large scale. There is in fact—and this is the captivating side of all real collecting—an actual bourse, an exchange, for post-



ers. The philosopher may smile, but the collector will let him smile. Not only posters as such, but even (as in the case of the most valuable prints) different "states" of the posters are collected. Posters before letter, posters on common paper and paper *de luxe*, signed by



Imp. BOURGERIE & CO, 53, Faub. St Denis, Paris.

G. DE FEURE, DEL. BOURGERIE & CO., PUBLISHERS.

EXHIBITION POSTER

the artists, or numbered in accordance with a rigidly limited numbering of copies. And why not, after all, since these lithographs have become true artistic prints? There have been, and will be again, exhibitions of posters where the names of Chérêt, Grasset, Willette, Toulouse-Lautrec, Pierre Bonnard, Louis Anguetin, G. de Feure, H. G. Ibels, and others are most highly valued. These posters are sought by amateurs and individual buyers for decorating apartments, halls, etc. There is even a small trade generated by the large trade—that of the *mounter* of posters; a workman (sometimes a binder, sometimes a framer) who pastes posters on a fine cloth back with a roller at each end, like the Japanese *kakimonos*.

Perhaps it was a little beyond the reader's expectation to see this little matter of the Parisian kakimono touched upon. But it is the most curious and the least known part of the history of the artistic poster. It might be supposed that art exhibitions had furnished a pretext for the most remarkable posters of this sort, but this is not quite true. Some very commonplace posters have



BONNARD, DEL.

Imp. Edw. Ancourt. PARIS
MAGAZINE POSTER

been made for very beautiful exhibitions. Besides, actual *posters* for art exhibitions have been comparatively rare ; some painters have painted *signs* rather than posters, to be put at the door of the place where they exhibited their works. But as these were compositions of which only a single example was painted, the souvenir disappeared as soon as the exhibition itself was finished. M. Bodinier, manager of

the Théâtre d'Application, otherwise called the Bodinière, where the most heterogeneous experiments in art and literature are gathered together—mixtures of talent and pretension, the whole résumé, in fact, of that art-madness which is just now carrying away the world of fashion—M. Bodinier has a most curious collection of these improvised posters. In his place several of the most remarkable exhibitions have occurred, notably those of Chéret, Ibels, Steinlen, and others, and each of these has furnished the subject of an interesting poster, especially that of Steinlen reproduced on page 23.

Another centre of exhibition of a kind more vital and purely artistic is the gallery of the periodical *La Plume*. The Salon des Cent, as the Exhibition of *La Plume* is called, has each time called forth a very different genre of poster, from an elegant bit of *parisiennerie* like that of M. Gaston Noury, to an austere piece of work like that of Grasset, or a subtle study like that of M. G. de Feure.

Finally, it should be mentioned that some exhibitions organized at the École des Beaux-Arts have been advertised

by Chéret's posters. It is rather amusing to note this, Chéret's talent being not precisely academic.

If we glance back at this little essay, we shall notice that the artists who themselves make the posters have generally served their own interests less efficiently than they have those of the manufacturers, musicians, and novelists. Painters have not the reputation of being especially modest, and yet they have had least recourse of all to the advertising quality of the poster. They are like famous cooks, who only very rarely taste their own cooking.

II

POSTERS AND
POSTER-DESIGNING
IN ENGLAND

M. H. SPIELMANN



FRED WALKER, A.R.A., DEL.
 "THE WOMAN IN WHITE," BY WILKIE COLLINS, 1871
 (BY PERMISSION OF THE "MAGAZINE OF ART")

*Posters and
 Poster-Designing
 in England*



FIFTY years ago Art and Commerce made little pretence of grasping hands. There was no reference to the "dignity" or "degradation" of which now we hear so much.



AUBREY BEARDSLEY, DEL., 1894

(AS YET UNPUBLISHED)

Wall-announcements and advertising-vans—the latter a nuisance long since legislated off London's face—were already a grievance fast growing into a scandal; and when in a spirit of banter

Punch suggested that advertisers had better take whole houses while they were about it and plaster their entire frontages with posters right up to the eaves, the hint was taken with appalling promptness and hideous effect. But Art was as yet unsmirched save by Rowland's "incomparable" Macassar Oil, beloved of Byron, and Warren's Nubian Blacking. The former showed us the interesting but unconvincing spectacle of a lady covered from head to foot with a luxuriant growth of hair obtained through a course of judicious loyalty to Mrs. Rowland ; and the latter, the delight of a negro grinning at the reflection of his face in a Wellington boot to which he has applied the splendor that lay hid in the blacking-bottle. And that was practically the sum of English poster art. It was admittedly not "high ;" but it was large, and made to cover vast acreage of space.

Matters went from bad to worse. Imitators—of the Catnach order, one would say—sprang up in plenty, and illustration accompanied printed announcement of a sort that did not require familiarity to breed contempt. It was a competition in vulgarity which,

while discrediting "displayed advertisement," made a walk in London streets past London hoardings a matter of tribulation. Practically, up to 1870 no pictorial effort appeared upon the walls that did not make the artistic angels weep. To that utter debasement, to the deliberate if not intentional ugliness—for sometimes there was obviously a vague idea of beauty in the designer's mind—and to the splendid vulgarity that nearly always accompanied it, we owe much of the prejudice that exists to this day in the minds of many artists and art writers against the union of art and advertisement; and it is as much in spite of them as of the advertisers themselves that Art has gradually forced her way into her rightful place, and promises henceforth to attend as fairy-godmother at the birth of many a commercial enterprise.

One of the first serious and worthy attempts to free "the poor man's picture-gallery" of its bad taste and barbaric coarseness was made in 1869 and 1870 by the *Graphic*, when it heralded its appearance with posters by M. Godfroy Durand, still a member of the staff. The first was a preliminary design fa-

miliarly called "The Tombstone" by reason of its shape and attendant winged *amorini*; and others represented a dignified female figure, and, during the Franco-Prussian war, a French and German soldier. These posters helped to show the way—but none followed in it, until in 1871 Fred Walker, A.R.A., drew his famous poster of "The Woman in White." This, a magnificent design of a woman, with her finger to her lips, stepping out into the starlight night, announced Wilkie Collins's new



REDRAWN BY FREDERICK BARNARD

story. People complained that it illustrated no scene in the story, ignorant of the fact that that was precisely Walker's intention, and was, in truth, at the very root of his and of the modern principle of poster-designing. This, he proclaimed, should not be a pictorial illustration of the object or commodity advertised at all, but a decoration which, completely harmonizing with its spirit, should yet attract by its independent originality and artistic beauty. "I am bent," he wrote at the time, "on doing all I can with a first attempt at what I consider *might develop into a most important branch of art.*" A reproduction of this poster, engraved on wood (before the days of process) by the hand of the man who won Walker's high commendation for his cutting of the great original block, is shown on page 34, through the courtesy of the proprietors of the *Magazine of Art*. No immediate outcome, however, was to be recorded; but "The Woman in White" became the mother of the many admirable designs in black-and-white which since that time have occasionally dignified our hoardings. To these it may be convenient here to refer.

When the *Magazine of Art* was started, Professor Herkomer, R.A., was appealed to to design a poster that should make the country talk, and show at the same time the ground that the publication proposed to cover. The vast poster reproduced on page 49 was the result—with its suggestion of Art distributing the favors of the great painters and sculptors grouped *en hemicyle* behind, to the artist, the artisan, the student, and the passer-by who stands in front. It was sufficiently conventional, yet sufficiently pictorial to be understood of the people, and the slight technical imperfection was forgiven for the sake of the success with which a difficult problem had been solved. Twelve years later, the present writer commissioned the same hand to design the poster for *Black and White* (page 48)—at the cost, it was currently reported, of thousands of pounds!—which for many weeks pleased the eye of the artist and worried the spirit of the Puritan of London. The letters received on the subject of this semi-nude statuesque figure from narrow-minded correspondents are among the curiosities of epistolary literature.

Mr. Walter Crane's advent into the field of poster-designing was the natural outcome of his artistic principles and activity. He began, in point of fact, before Fred Walker, as in 1869 he produced the poster for a lead-pencil manufacturer, and continued at Mr. Comyns Carr's request with a still-remembered design in blue and yellow for the Promenade Concerts of the Covent Garden Theatre in the early '80's—one of the best he ever executed, but unfortunately at this date absolutely unprocurable. In this poster Orpheus was shown harping to the beasts—scant courtesy, it may be thought, to the public it was intended to attract. Then appeared the "Olympia" poster, which billed the town on the arrival of the French Hippodrome troupe that came over to



DRAWN BY JOHN WHITE FROM THE PAINTING BY
G. D. LESLIE, R.A.



SIR JOHN MILLAIS, R.A., DEL.

astonish London (page 56); and though it was really intended as an illustration for the book issued in connection with the same entertainment, it attracted in its enlarged form all eyes to the hoardings by the quietness and distinction of its style and the beauty of its lines. Afterward came the poster of his own exhibition at the Fine Art So-

ciety's Gallery in 1891; the colored design for Hale & Co.'s Champagnes, the black-and-white for the "Arts and Crafts," for the *English Illustrated Magazine*, and the various Scottish insurance companies which, with curious unanimity, found virtue in Mr. Crane's early efforts to influence for good the libels on the name of art which disgraced our London streets. One of the most effective of all Mr. Crane's disciples is Professor R. Anning Bell, whose admirable poster for the Liverpool Gallery of Art (page 55) was his first achievement in the University of that city.

The great principle of poster designing—that it should be unconventionally conventional and decorative, and if possible original—has not always been accepted by artists, especially by picture-painters, and even by illustrators in black-and-white. The little shipwrecked lady who, by means of a cake of Cleaver's Soap, prettily "washed herself ashore," so far violated the rules of the game that it did not count as an artistic effort at all, notwithstanding its great popularity; nor admirable and effective as are Mr. Lockhart Bogle's

strong posters for the annual Scottish Gathering—"Putting the Shot" and "Throwing the Hammer" (page 46)—did they attract so much attention by their aptness for poster design as by the ability displayed in their draughtsmanship and by the vigor of the arrested action of the Highland athletes. On the other hand, the classic dignity of the posters by Mr. E. F. Skinner (best known, perhaps, as a comic draughtsman) for the Hampton Club (page 53) and for the *Star* newspaper were perfect of their kind, and though through the practical absence of color they were not decorative in the fullest degree possible, they were among the most impressive and best-drawn of London posters.

Mr. Linley Sambourne, of *Punch*, too, has contributed for some years to the hoardings a lively drawing of a lady smoking a cigarette as she sits on a champagne cork—but this was an enlargement of a random sketch made, in accordance with the artist's pleasant custom, on a sheet of note-paper, while talking with a visitor. It was intended for a book. Similarly, Mr. Harry Furniss's filthy Casual, who used Pears' Soap years and years ago, "since when

he has used no other," is simply an enlargement of a *Punch* cut. Nevertheless, they do their share in educating the public taste away from the horrors of 1850, and in preparing it for black-and-white work such as M. Willette's lithograph—not entirely suitable for the position, it is true, but full of passion and tears—"L'Enfant Prodigue." Far better adapted to its purpose, though too light and delicate in its lines for effective wall-treatment, was the admirable theatrical bill designed by Mr. Heywood Sumner for Mr. Benson's Shakespearian revivals.



C. BURTON BARBER, DEL.

While Walker and his followers were tempting popular taste away from Warren's Blacking, America through her theatrical posters was showing to England how much more could be done by

SCOTTISH GATHERING



LOCKHART BOGLE, DEL.

lithography in the way of color than by the old wood-block methods—in which the tint of a face was composed of diagonal red lines which fell into their places and became pink (through courtesy of the intermediate bars of plain white paper) when the spectator retired to a distance of ten or twenty yards.

But, unhappily, this otherwise capital innovation was entirely in the direction of pictorial treatment; and the English manufacturers and traders, with characteristic perversity, seized upon it at once. The high finish delighted them; and encouraged by the example of theatrical

managers—who were pleased to be able to represent a play-scene upon paper with all the glories (and a good deal more) of its native colors—they proceeded to test it in the direction of picture-reproduction. Traders bought popular paintings with their copyrights at sums which in themselves were bold advertisements, and had them reproduced with such additional effects and details as would proclaim their wares. Thus “Bubbles,” of Sir John Millais, R.A. (page 42); “This is the Way we Wash the Clothes,” of Mr. G. D. Leslie, R.A. (page 41); “Mariana,” by Mr. J. J. Shannon; “A Dress Rehearsal,” by Mr. Chevallier Tayler; Venetian *genre* scenes by M. Van Haanen; Landseer, Edouard Frère, even Rubens and Rembrandt—have all in turn advertised articles of trade; and had not Fred Walker’s “Bathers” been run up to \$13,125 at the Graham sale in 1886, it would now be in the service of soap, instead of reposing as a treasured gem in Mr. Cuthbert Quilter’s picture-gallery. Soap, it may be said, although the most advertised commodity in Great Britain, is not the most attractive thing for an artist to deal with. A naturally clean



H. HERKOMER, R. A., DEL.

public is getting tired of it; and for all that it may be "matchless for the complexion," we do not want to have it continuously thrust in our faces. On the other hand, advertisers claim to know their own business best from the business point of view, and the greatest of

them all reminds me that "this French exhibition (at the Aquarium), I may tell you, as an advertiser of some little experience, is an absurdity, whatever may be said of it in respect to its 'art.'"

Nevertheless, it soon began to dawn upon some commercial minds that the original suitability of a special design might prove as attractive to the public as the most apt distortion of a popular



H. HERKOMER, R.A., DEL.

BY PERMISSION OF THE "MAGAZINE OF ART"

picture, and that besides being talked of for the wares alone they might obtain additional credit for promoting Commerce to the Seat of Patronage long since vacated by the Church. And so Mr. Stacy Marks, R.A., made his design for Pears' Shaving-soap; Mr. Poynter, R.A., his notable and richly colored "Minerva in her Temple" for the Guardian Insurance Company; Mr. Wyllie, A.R.A., his fine marine picture for the Orient Steamship Company; Mr. C. Burton Barber, his "Guardian Shepherd Dog" for the Lifebuoy Soap (page 45); Mr. Charles Green, R.I., his Georgian scene for Collinson & Lock; and so forth. The idea incubated, and on the quadruple experience I have indicated (Walker's example—American execution—reproduction of pictures—and special designing by distinguished hands) there shone the color-beams from the wonderful chromo-lithographic decorative work introduced by M. Chéret into delighted Paris, with all their joyousness of subject and of pose. London woke up one day to find the first of all the series of this sort enlivening every hoarding. It was by M. Jan Van Beers, and drew attention to the



BISSON, DEL.

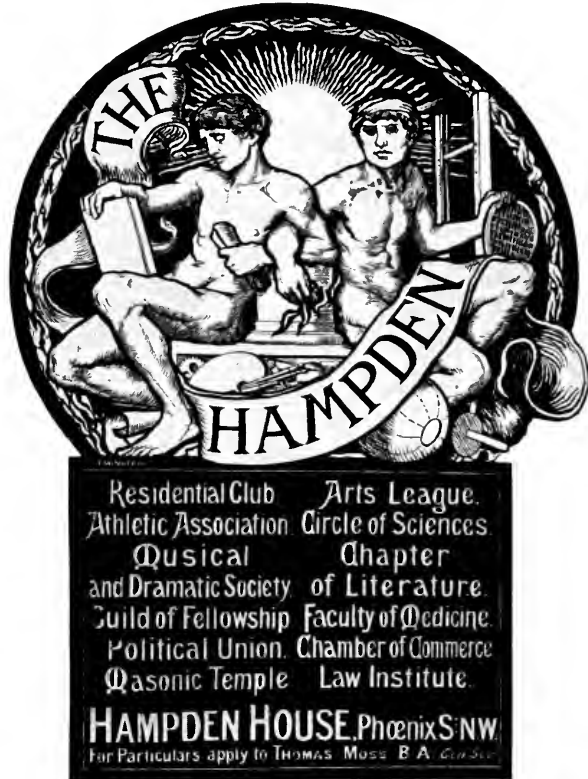
FROM THE PICTURE EXHIBITED AT THE PARIS SALON

(REPRODUCED BY THE COURTESY OF DAVID ALLEN & SONS, PUBLISHERS.)

“Salon Parisien” in Bond Street, at which his first exhibition in England was about to be opened. The prudes were a little scandalized at this short-skirted vision in yellow, but the brightness and suggestive mirth of the composition tickled the public mind, and contributed greatly to the success of the artistic enterprise. His second poster for “La Cigale” at the Lyric Theatre—flatter in manner and simpler in tint—was the first hint I saw on English walls of the style that was soon to dominate the more talked-of poster-artists of the present day, whose performances have been seen together in Mr. Edward Bella’s collection at the Royal Aquarium aforesaid.

Where M. Van Beers led, two draughtsmen of original talent and overflowing spirits quickly followed—Mr. Paleologue and Mr. Dudley Hardy. The former, gifted with extraordinary dash and *chic*, which, refusing to be bound by the ordinary Academic laws of anatomy or classic gravity, produced a poster for *Pick-me-up* that exactly reproduced the spirit of the paper it proclaimed. Mr. Hardy, though a frank imitator of Mr. Van Beers, brought an

added charm, piquancy, and “sensuous suavity” which told with extraordinary effect upon the walls, and with his singular ability to draw a smile, especially when daintily illumined by the up-thrown light of the footlights, and his clear use of telling colors, have made him one of the most telling and popular of bill-designers. There is undoubtedly the scent of the stage and the *demi-monde* about most of his ladies, as



F. F. SKINNER, DEL.

you may trace in his three designs for “The Gaiety Girl,” in the great poster of *To-day* (page 61), and even in the theatrical air of the lily-bearing Sister who, with sanctified air, heralded the arrival of *St. Paul's*. But all the more, perhaps, for that are his efforts applauded and his pencil employed.

Next to Mr. Hardy, and linking him with the latest movement, comes Mr. Robert Fowler, R.I., whose rather hesitating design in five colors for the Walker Art Gallery of Liverpool has through his classic dignity something of the spirit of the former with more than a *soupeçon* of the Academic flavor of latter-day poster-designers. Among these M. André Sinet created a great impression by the poster he made for his exhibition at the Goupil Gallery (page 59), and his simple figure of a girl drawn in five colors was quickly acted upon. The fine taste and masterly "placing" in Mr. Mortimer Menpes's announcement-sheets, were passed over in favor of the spirit of Messrs. Sinet, Steinlen, and de Lautrec—perhaps because he was too individual, too personal and simple to permit of satisfactory imitation. Mr. Raven Hill's two-colored poster for *Pick-me-up* (page 64), and in particular Mr. Maurice Greiffenhagen's bill for the now defunct *Pall Mall Budget* (page 66), created a distinct sensation among the younger men, and enabled them to catch the public eye—as they had captured a considerable section of the London press in its critical

CITY OF
LIVERPOOL
SCHOOL OF
ARCHITECTURE AND APPLIED ART



CLASSES IN
ARCHITECTURE
MODELLING
PAINTING AND
DRAWING CAR-
VING IN WOOD
AND STONE OR-
NAMENTS
WROUGHT IRON
WORK ETC. ETC.
FOR PARTICULARS
APPLY TO THE DIRECTOR

UNIVERSITY



COLLEGE

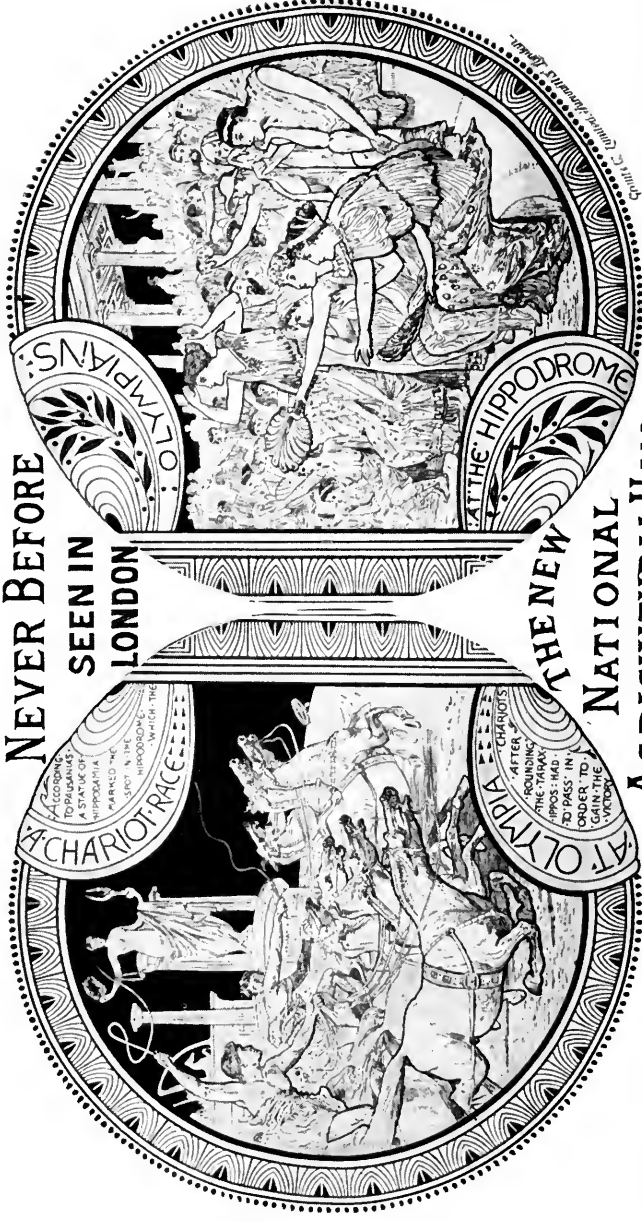
ROBERT

ANNING BELL DEL.

R. ANNING BELL, DEL.

GREAT PARIS HIPPODROME

NEVER BEFORE
SEEN IN
LONDON



THE NEW

NATIONAL

AGRICULTURAL HALL

OLYMPIA KENSINGTON

AT ADDISON ROAD STATION

TRAINS & OMNIBUSES DIRECT TO THE DOORS EVERY FEW MINUTES

WALTER CRANE, DEL.

columns, as well as an equal section of wall-space in the exhibition galleries. Mr. Greiffenhagen's work was peculiar enough to attract public attention and elegant enough not to repel it ; its three colors and their relative proportion were well enough selected and balanced to please the artist, and the whole was sufficiently successful to encourage other works in the same line.

Meanwhile Mr. Aubrey Beardsley had appeared on the artistic horizon — a draughtsman of weird and singular power, who, after importing into his art elements so suggestively opposite as his distorted echoes of Chinese or Annamite execution and Rossettian feeling, seen with a squinting eye, imagined with a Mephistophelian brain, and executed with a vampire hand, showed a deep natural instinct for the beauty of line, for the balance of chiaroscuro, and for decorative effect. It was the æsthetic craze of a former day run mad — startlingly novel, original, and *spirituel*, and full of artistic cleverness. Here was indeed the New Poster, ready to the pen of the New Critic and the New Humorist !

His first effort in the direction of

poster-designing was the bill for the Avenue Theatre (page 63), from which many of the stranger characteristics of his drawings were prudently if necessarily withheld. A "creepy" vision of a peacock-green, low-necked woman, behind a transparent curtain, stood with a quiet dignity and quaint simplicity of line that was in itself effective, if not imposing or pleasing. Plainly, the lady was forbidding, "uncanny," inhuman; yet her reception was appreciative, if not altogether sympathetic and complimentary, and provided an excellent target for the shafts of the year's satire. Then followed from the same hand

the colored posters from Mr. Fisher Unwin, the publisher, in which the draughtsman put nature and the simply weird entirely on one side, and dealt solely in the grotesque. It was magnificent in point of audacity, but apart from the technical virtue of



P. WILSON STEER, DEL.

NOW ON VIEW
PICTURES & SKETCHES
 by
M. ANDRÉ SINET.



THE
GOVIL GALLERY
5 RECENT STREET.

Admission 1/6 with Catalogue. **PALL MALL. S.W.**
 10 till 6

ANDRÉ SINET, DEL.

balance and a certain Oriental treatment of the distance, it was not beauty, such as is exoterically accepted and understood. It was not surprising that these works should produce a caricature such as that executed by Mr. J. Hearn under the pseudonym of "Weirdsley Daubery" for the performance of "Pygmalion and Galatea" as played at Oxford under the ægis of

the Rev. the Vice-Chancellor of the University (page 62). A serious imitator of talent, who has rejected the extremer views, or does not share the personality, of Mr. Beardsley is Mr. Lewis Baumer, who for the Royal Academy Students' Club in 1894 produced a poster which in point of line set forth some of the best and most characteristic tenets of the Beardsley cult and creed.

And finally, there are the grim designs of Mr. Pryde and Mr. Nicholson, artists who work at poster-making under the professional name of "The Beggarstaff Brothers." They are in the very van of the advance-guard of poster-designers who have led the faithful from the gaudy to the joyous, and on to the sober, to the melancholy, and the depressing. Messrs. Beggarstaffs' design for "Hamlet" for Somebody's Blue, Dash's Candles, for Niggers, and for Pianos, are among the most striking of all the English attempts at original poster-designing, challenging the attention of the passer-by and claiming his admiration for the powerful and simple dignity of the figure in the first case (black upon brown), or for the effect of



DUDLEY HARDY, DEL.

(REPRODUCED BY THE COURTESY OF DAVID ALLEN & SONS, PUBLISHERS.)

fine white lines and blue spots upon a black ground in the second. They are undeniably conceived in the minor key, and after impressing the beholder with their individuality, they send him away thoroughly dejected, and convinced of the entire rightness of their claim to be affixed to a "dead" wall. They are about as like to Chéret's posy-like *af-fiches* as a grim and ascetic old Carmelite is like to a lady of the *cops de ballet*.

"To imagine London," writes my friend Van Beers, "billed with good figures by good designers is, I fear, to imagine a Utopia. Much that is to be done might be done above all in the comic *genre* and by reduction of forms to a humorous point of absurdity and exaggeration.



WEIRDSLEY DAUBERY (J. HEARN), DEL.

I should like an opportunity of showing what I mean." Humor undoubtedly has its uses. One day all London was smiling at the matutinal welcome of "Good-morning—have you used Pears' Soap?" as it had before smiled at a negro-cupid whose body had been washed pink by a judicious use of the same commodity. But humor in English posters usually takes the empty, vapid form of well-known statesmen nailing down carpets or manning boats—very little indeed that is really witty.

A capital recent poster in colors, in support of a cycle exhibition, conceived in the manner of Chéret, represented a tandem bicycle with a fair coryphée in tights on the front seat; and many were the letters of angry



AUBREY BEARDSLEY, DEL.
(MR. BEARDSLEY'S FIRST POSTER DESIGN)



L. RAVEN HILL, DEL.

denunciation that were sent to the papers in protest. And when the Bovril Highland Bull, by Mr. William Watson, R.S.A., was posted in Cork, a Town Councillor impeached it on the score of impropriety!

Where, one would ask, in the face of such facts, is the sense of humor with which M. Van Beers would coquet to the advantage of the poster-public? The truth is that the artistic and non-artistic views of "vulgarity," as entertained by the English people, are sharply at variance. The vulgarity of the non-artistic poster rarely strikes them; but in the artistic—almost exclusively in the treatment of the feminine figure—what they call vulgarity is usually a certain suggestiveness, usually fancied, rarely real, which in either case

the artist hardly notices, if at all, on account of its artistry.

"I fear," says Mr. Walter Crane, in discussing the matter from another point of view, "that there is something essentially vulgar about the idea of the poster unless it is limited to simple announcements or directions, or becomes a species of heraldry, or sign-painting. The jostling together of conflicting scenes and motives on the hoarding, however, to which all must submit, is as inartistic a condition of things as a picture exhibition. The very fact of the necessity of shouting loud, and the association with vulgar commercial puffing, are against the artist and so much dead weight."

But, surely, the fact is at last becoming recognized that "shouting" is no longer necessary. Just as to practised ears in a boiler-shop the whisper of a man or a soft note of music, can be heard above the deafening din of a hundred hammers, so the artistic poster of real beauty proclaims itself gently, but irresistibly, out of the mass of violent kaleidoscopic color and common design. Few colors in strong contrast skilfully arranged, the fewest lines and masses,



MAURICE GREIFFENHAGEN, DEL.

simple chiaroscuro, added to charm, grace, dignity, or vigor of design—these are the elements and essentials ; and if the conditions are properly fulfilled the result is an artistic triumph of which any artist might be proud. That we in England, too long delayed, are at last advancing toward this point, there is little reason to doubt ; not, primarily, through any motives of philanthropy or enthusiasm on the part of the designers who are the mainspring of the movement, but rather through the law of self-protection against the perpetrations of bygone days. In this laudable crusade they are being slowly encouraged by some of the advertisers themselves, who are finding that they can attract more attention with novel and artistic posters than with shouting ugliness or rampant Philistinism. But never can the improvement be more than partial.

To the end of time vulgarity will be for the vulgar, and I much fear that the best means of enlisting middle-class sympathy and attracting middle-class cash is to appeal, without any show of artistic superiority, to middle-class taste and understanding.

III

AMERICAN POSTERS
PAST
AND PRESENT

H. C. BUNNER



DRAWN BY E. POTTHAST FOR THE STROBRIDGE LITHOGRAPH COMPANY



IN America—at least, in the United States—the poster enjoys an absolutely unique distinction. In other countries it has been prized

*American Posters
Past and
Present*

and admired, cherished in costly collections, and honored with the most serious artistic study and criticism. But in the United States the poster has been—and in some parts of the land it is yet—not only admired, but loved.

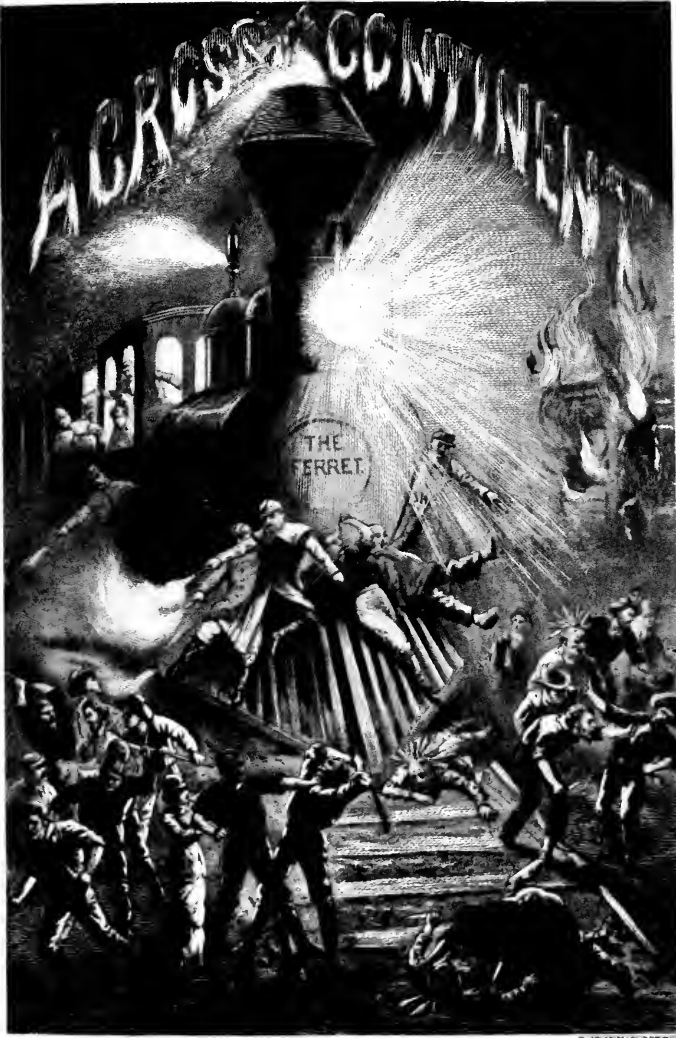
The craving to look at pictures, or even decorative lettering or pure decoration itself, seems to be natural to all types and classes of Americans. Any kind of picture attracts the untutored taste; but of course the preference is generally given to such as, according to the code of the art for art's sake people, should be consigned to eternal perdition as “distinctly literary.” But in default of the picture that tells its own direct and indirect comprehensible story, the untaught native taste will accept pretty nearly anything in the general line of graphic art. It is the same in country and in town. The indifference of the New York street crowds to strange sights, odd people, fantas-

tic costumes, and the like has often been noted. Yet the hurrying workers who will not give a second glance to an Oriental garbed in dazzling gorgeousness, or even to a dime-museum giant off duty, will stop short at the sight of a sign-painter, and, putting all business or occupation aside, will gaze on him in seemingly helpless fascination while he letters "Eisenstein, Ein-

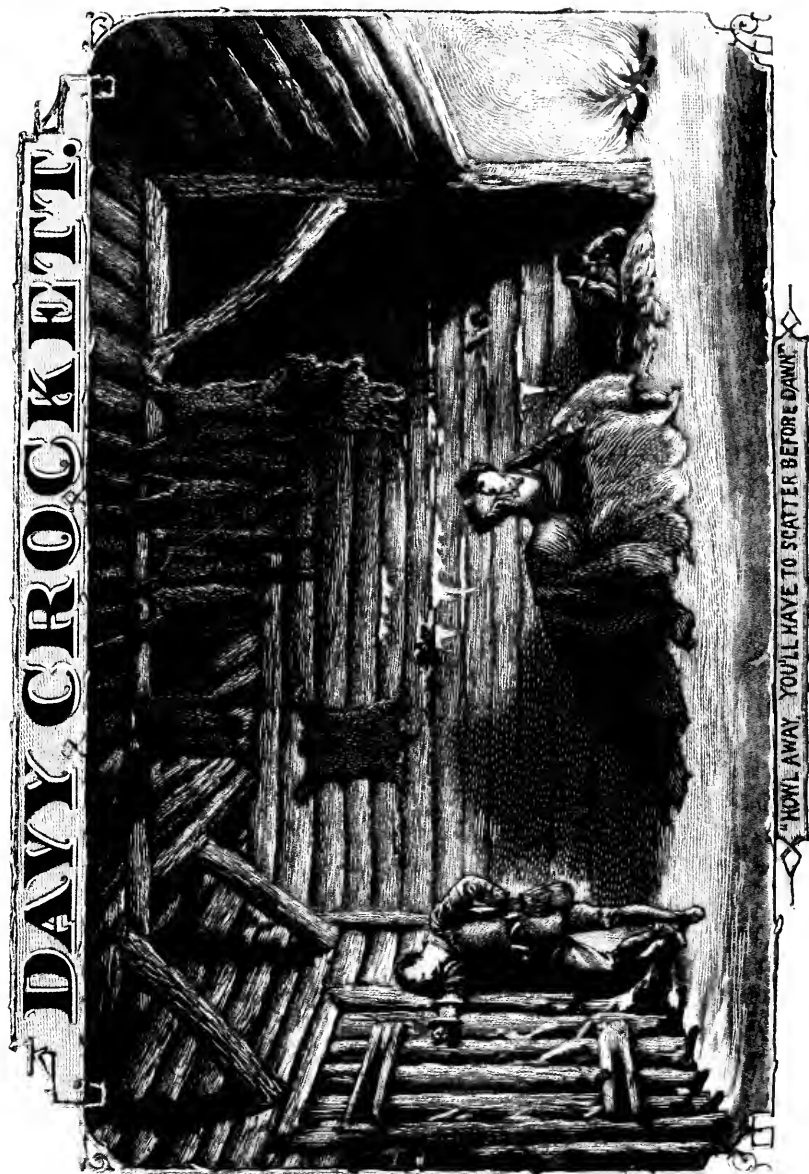
stein, Ehrenstein, Johnstone & Co."

And if by chance he illuminates his handiwork with a design of the garment known as "pants," and bearing a distant and painful resemblance to trousers, the crowd will stay faithfully by him till the last stroke of

OLIVER DOUD BYRON

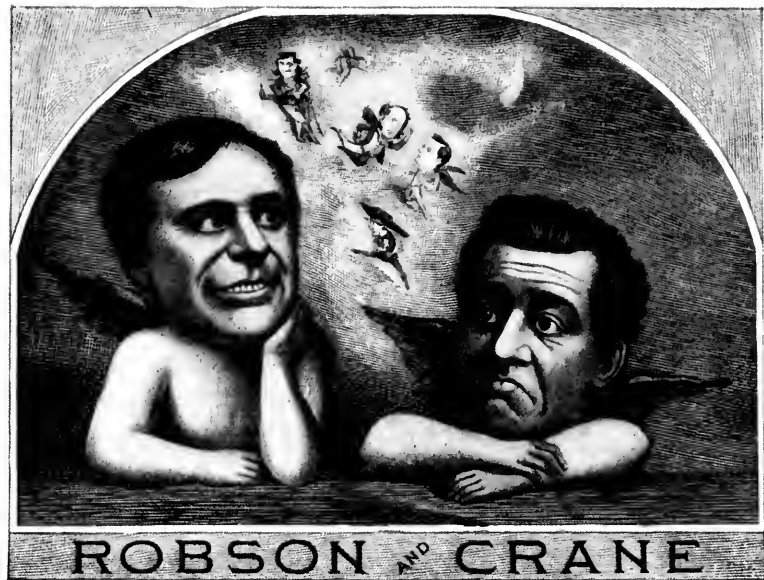


DESIGNED AND PRINTED BY THE STROBRIDGE LITHOGRAPH COMPANY
AN EXAMPLE OF THE PRIMITIVE AND CONFUSED THEATRICAL POSTERS



DRAWN BY MATT MORGAN FOR THE STROBRIDGE LITHOGRAPH COMPANY

A TYPE OF AN EARLY CLASS INTERESTING AND TRUTHFUL AS PICTURES YET INEFFECTIVE AS POSTERS



DRAWN BY JOSEPH BAKER FOR THE FORBES LITHOGRAPH COMPANY IN 1877

his brush—silent, eager, intent—looking upon him as upon one who performs a miracle.

It is, of course, the process of production more than the thing produced that holds the attention of the admiring townsman; but the attraction is not at all unlike that which fills the spirit of the back-country boy with wondering rapture when he sees the swift and dexterous pioneers of the circus arrive with paste-pots and brushes and ladders and ponderous burdens of huge sheets of paper laid in thick folds like cloth, and with an almost superhuman speed transform old Squire Calkins's long

board fence into a picture-gallery that is not only an orgy in the primary colors, but a most marvellous illumination of the works of nature, and a revelation of possibilities never before dreamed of by the student of natural history or the humble observer of animated nature.

Do you wonder that he loves it? Do you wonder that his soul prostrates itself before the elephant whose ears are so big that the ends of the flaps have to be supported by two attendant Nubians? Do you wonder that he loves the dromedary



DRAWN BY ROBERT JOSTE FOR THE METROPOLITAN PRINT. COMPANY
AN EXAMPLE OF THE COARSEST WOOD-ENGRAVED THEATRICAL
POSTER

with four humps? No dromedary in his "jogafy-book" has any such holiday allowance of humps. Of course he will not see these marvellous features, and, in a certain sense, he knows it. They were not visible in last year's circus; and his cynical elder brother has openly and blasphemously denied their existence. But as he watches the great pictured sheets drying out in the sun, and smells the smell of paste—always pleasant in his nostrils, because of its association with many sticky achievements in the way of malicious

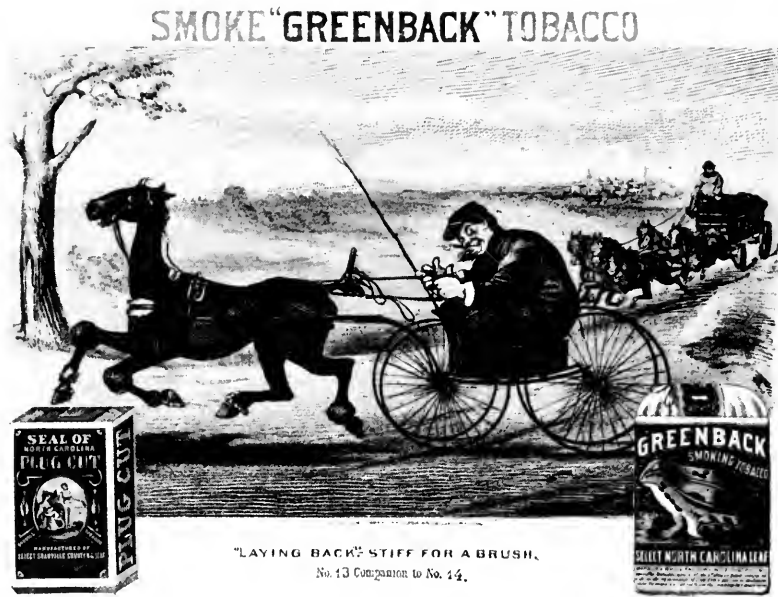
mischief—why, the boy sees those animals, and those assorted colored people in regal clothes, just as if they were really there—for he sees them with the eye of faith. He would be ungrateful, indeed, if he did not love the circus-poster.



DRAWN BY MATT MORGAN FOR THE STROBRIDGE LITHOGRAPH
COMPANY IN 1881

All mankind loves the circus, and what circus ever rose to the glorious promise of its posters ?

But it was not only the circus-poster that took hold on the hearts of the country-folk of remote regions. Although the fondness for pictures was general in man, woman, and child, it was not quite openly avowed. Certain old Puritanical traditions moved the people to look upon such home decorations as idle vanities ; and even had this prejudice been less general the sources of artistic supply were meagre in the extreme. Therefore the crude and costly printed posters of the circus, the travelling juggler, the Indian herb-doctor, the horse-dealer, and, more often than the rest, the gaudy lithographs advertising agricultural implements and patent medicines, were welcome in the little towns and at the lonely cross-roads. They were not often allowed in the house ; but their utilitarian character gave them a sort of right to a place on the walls of the barn ; and it was here that the boys and the hired men between them would set up an art-gallery which was never quite complete until a sheet of considerable size



DRAWN BY THOMAS WORTH. REPRODUCED BY PERMISSION OF CURRIER & IVES
AN EXAMPLE OF THE OLD FASHIONED "BEFORE AND AFTER" POSTER

was skillfully reft from the pictured pageant on the board fence.

There is something pitiful in this attempt to satisfy a natural appetite with the very lowest forms of pictorial artifice; and a serious mischief sprang from it in the damper it put on any development or progress in the art of poster designs. It became an understood thing that the general public would not have anything better than the flashy and ill-executed prints to which they had grown accustomed; and year after year the same old pictorial horrors were scattered broadcast in city and country. This pernicious example had an influ-

SMOKE "GREENBACK" TOBACCO



"HUNG UP WITH THE STARCH OUT;

No. 14 Companion to No. 13.

DRAWN BY THOMAS WORTH.

REPRODUCED BY PERMISSION OF CURRIER & IVES

AN EXAMPLE OF THE OLD FASHIONED "BEFORE AND AFTER" POSTERS

ence on a class of producers who should have been above the half-superstitious folly. The theatrical managers caught the idea; and although the establishment of the lithographic art in this country gave them facilities which they had never had before, they stuck to the primitive system of printing from roughly engraved wood-blocks, superimposing one cross-hatching of color upon another; the result attained being perhaps more hideous and incoherent than anything which could be done in any other way of color-printing.

This absurd tradition practically checked all advance in poster-designing

until a score of years ago ; and so far as the theatrical people were concerned it is more than doubtful whether they would ever have got out of the rut they had got into, if it had not been that the commercial people crowded them out of it. I do not wish to imply that there

were no exceptions to the rule of stupidity among the theatrical managers. A few self-respecting managers like Messrs. Palmer and Abbey and the late Lester Wallack made a number of brave and intelligent attempts to find graceful and dignified forms of pictorial advertising. But for the most part our actors and actresses



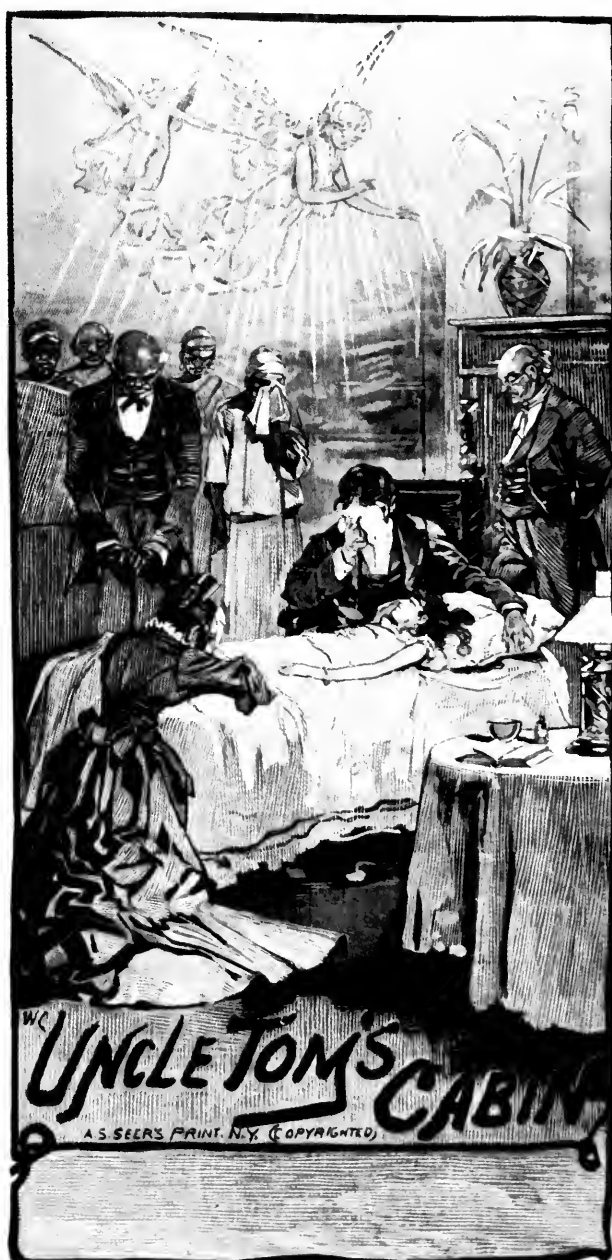
DRAWN BY ROBERT JOSTE. PUBLISHED BY THE METROPOLITAN
PRINT. COMPANY

THEATRICAL POSTER FOR "RIP VAN WINKLE"
(REPRESENTATIVE SPECIMEN OF THE OLD WOOD-ENGRAVED
"STOCK" * POSTER)

* "Stock" posters are made on speculation by the manufacturers and sold as often as called for, the name of the star being inserted.

allowed themselves to be portrayed on the bill-boards in a medium so grossly and unnecessarily offensive to good taste that the meanest mountebank might have blushed to find himself so set before the world. So dead was the poster-making art that serious dramatic and lyric artists had not even the resource of tasteful and appropriate decoration for their public announcements, but were obliged to use plain type—and type of designs of half a century old. It was at this point that the Genius of Patent Medicine came to the relief of Histrionic Art.

Up to this time the Patent Medicine poster had been the most pitiful of all forms of pictorial adver-



DRAWN BY WILLIAM H. CRANE.

PUBLISHED BY A. S. SEER

THEATRICAL POSTER FOR "UNCLE TOM'S CABIN"

(REPRESENTATIVE SPECIMEN OF THE OLD WOOD-ENGRAVED
"STOCK" POSTER*)

tising. In conception it never aimed to be more than feebly instructive, and in execution it was as hideous as cheap work could make it. It was constructed upon one of a few simple formulas—simple to the point of idiocy. Of these the most in use was what was known as the “Before and After”—which was short for Before and After Taking. This involved the employment of two pictures, one of which represented a lean and haggard wretch of advanced years, destitute of teeth, and but sparsely provided with hair, who was apparently trying to present his physical disabilities to the beholder in the most unpleasant possible light. The other picture showed a sturdy, lusty person in the prime of life, with well-slicked hair and as many teeth as the artist could crowd into his mouth, which was always shown stretched open in a laugh of an impossibly large size. Those who gazed on this display were expected to believe that the miracle of transforming the aged wreck into an offensively healthy person of thirty-five had been accomplished by the use of three bottles of OLD DR. RIPLEY’S RESURGENT REINVIGORATOR OR IMBRICATED INDIAN TONIC.

This was the favorite formula, but others pressed it hard. One that had considerable popularity showed a happy and precocious little boy with red striped stockings, yellow clothes, and, necessarily, red and yellow hair, rushing merrily into the room of his aged grandmother, and offering her a bottle of the good doctor's decoction. This little boy was among the most useful of all poster-subjects; for if the advertiser wanted to spend money, he could have two pictures, in the first of which the grandmother sat paralyzed in her arm-chair with a crutch by her side—not a nice, easy crutch, but just a plain old home-made T-shaped



DRAWN BY JOSEPH BAKER FOR THE FORBES LITHOGRAPH COMPANY IN 1879

AN EXAMPLE OF THE EXTREMELY FINISHED LITHOGRAPHIC THEATRICAL POSTER

(INTERESTING ALSO AS BEING THE FIRST POSTER EVER PRODUCED REPRESENTING JEFFERSON IN CHARACTER)

affair—while in the second tableau the boy's rejuvenated relative accompanied him to the front door, and cast her crutch violently into the perspective. On the other hand, if the advertiser

wanted to do things cheaply, one picture would suffice: wherein the old lady rose from her striped arm-chair; flinging her crutch loosely among the furniture at the mere sight of the boy and the bottle. In either case the old lady's chair was striped with the colors of the boy.

But the day came when some shrewd advertiser perceived that these pictures

really had no firm claim on the popular respect. This was shown by the unfailing certainty with which, sooner or later, the lead-pencil of the public decorated the small boy with spectacles, and his grandmother with side-whiskers.

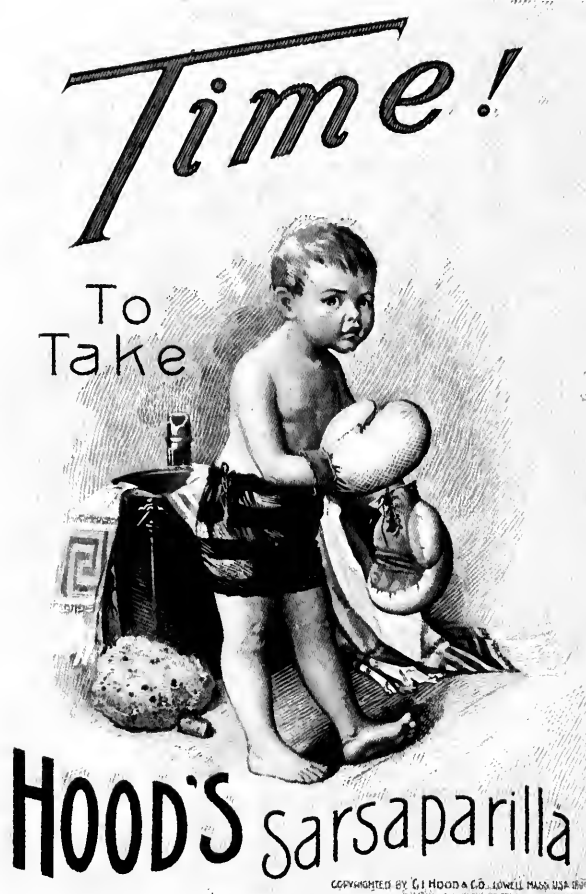


DRAWN BY JOSEPH BAKER

This man must have reasoned as did the trustees of the Boston Public Library, when they found that the citizens were making the shabby old furniture of the library look shabbier yet with ink-marks and knife-cuts. Some officials would have turned out the offending citizens, but these trustees were wiser. They turned out the shabby old furniture, and replaced it with the handsomest that money could buy. Then the people respected those who had treated them with respect, and the defacement stopped forever. Applying the same idea to the Patent Medicine Poster business, our advertiser set to work to address himself to the public, with a decent courtesy and deference. His plan worked; perhaps he surprised himself, certainly he surprised the public. Even the worried business man, hurrying to his office, stopped when



COL. W. F. CODY
"BUFFALO BILL"



DRAWN BY F. J. KABER

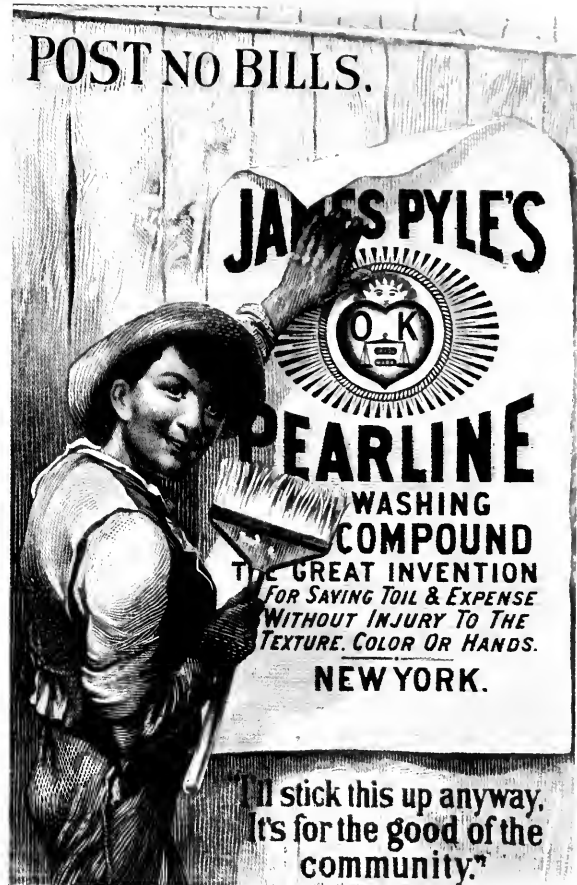
costliest skill. The subject was nothing—a single figure and the article to be advertised; but the latter object, while it was recognizable, was not unduly prominent; and the figure was an admirably drawn study of a type well chosen to interest observers of every class.

The success of this first appeal to the popular interest by really artistic

he found himself confronted with a poster that, though it bore the name of a well-known nostrum, bore also a highly attractive picture, well conceived and well executed; evidently an artist's design, and not that of an artisan; evidently made especially for the use it was put to, and evidently reproduced by the

methods was so marked and unmistakable that it found numerous imitators. Business men, who spent money largely in pictorial advertising, began to see that it was not the quantity but the quality of the printing they put forth that caught and held the popular eye; and it looked for a little while as though Ameri-

can ingenuity and liberality might do for the poster something approaching what natural taste and inborn inspiration had already done for it in France. The vulgar conventionalities of the past began to lose their commercial value; and the artist was called in to do what the advertising agent had done before. Still, so little did Americans, in the office or in the studio, realize that art is



DRAWN BY THEODORE A. LIESLER

worthy of respect, even in its humblest manifestations, that the artists were ashamed to put their names to the good work they did for the good money of the advertiser; and the advertisers

fatuously congratulated themselves on the fact that good artists came a few dollars cheaper anonymously than they did when they signed their names. But any real progress in the art of poster-making in America was checked at this time by two unfavorable circumstances. The most obvious, though the least in effect, was the fact that picto-



DESIGNED AND PRINTED BY THE STROBRIDGE LITHOGRAPH COMPANY

rial advertising had naturally been diverted into other channels, so that it proved cheaper and more effective to employ high-priced artists in illustrating circulars, calendars, and dainty gift-books than to set them at a somewhat discredited form of work. The second was the fact that the German lithographer—that is, the artisan draughtsman who redraws the artist's picture upon the stone—is a man of an enduring force of character only to be found elsewhere in the mule and the martyr at the stake.

Most lithographic draughtsmen in this country are either Germans or German-Americans, and they adhere with persistence to the traditions of German technique. This technique is admirable for its purpose. The color-work is done in a highly finished crayon drawing that is really a stipple or a close imitation of it. This work takes a firm hold on stone, rendering it possible to make many prints and transfers, and by its near approach to a mechanical process bringing the work within the capacity of anybody who can learn to copy values at all.

There is no questioning the advan-

tage of this in what is known as commercial lithography; but it makes of the lithographic workshops a very uncomfortable place for any Art that seeks a less conventional expression. The lithographic draughtsman has very little use for Art, and a profound contempt for the Artist. Set before him, at the top of his little wooden desk, the most brilliant water-color that Fortuny ever dashed off, and as he slowly separates its mystic tints into what he considers

their component elements, and reproduces them in his even, unvarying grain, that pleases him the better the more he makes it look like machine-work, he will pity the poor devil of an unskilful artist who didn't know how to finish his work up "nice and smooth."

I should hard-



ly have made mention of the perverse conservatism that for many years prevailed against the efforts of every artist who tried to do anything new and bold in the use of flat tints, or new forms of modelling in designing of posters, if it were simply the perversity of ignorance. But there is a warning conveyed in what I have said which all who seek the reproduction of works of art by mechanical means would do well to heed—and for complement and corroboration, I refer them to Mr. Spielmann's able article on "English Posters." The



DRAWN BY HUGO ZIEGFELD FOR THE H. C. MINER-SPRINGER LITHOGRAPH COMPANY

spirit that inspired this perversity was the spirit that separates the laborer from the artist. The lithographic draughtsman resented the introduction of new methods, because, having learned the old ones, he was unwilling to learn further—because he preferred to be a human machine at a fixed rate of wages to being a self-educating human creature, accepting thankfully every opportunity to raise himself to a higher plane of achievements. It is, and it always will be, useless for the artist to struggle with this spirit. Where he is obliged to ask the assistance of manual labor, he must ask it from those only (and they are numerous enough) who respect his aims, and who in some measure aspire to his knowledge and skill.

With the acceptance of the really handsome, admiration-compelling poster, the American took his first step on a path already well beaten in France, whence it practically took its start. He had learned one important lesson in the art of poster-making; but there were others that he had to go to Paris to learn.

Let us suppose him there, seeking for light, under intelligent guidance.

Let us personify him and his conductor as the American Mentor and Telemachus, Mr. Halliday and Rollo. Thus might run an instructive bit of street dialogue :

ROLLO.—Father, what is that extraordinary picture on the circular bill-board over yonder. I am speaking particularly of the yellow lady kicking the silk hat off the blue moon.

MR. HALLIDAY.—That, my son, is an advertisement of a patent specific for the cure of ingrowing eyebrows. The lady, having been relieved of this painful and disfiguring malady, is expressing her gratitude, and celebrating her return to a natural vivacity of spirits.

ROLLO.—Thank you, father, I was about to ask



you how you obtained this information, but I am glad now that I refrained from speaking hastily ; for I perceive that the name is printed inconspicuously in an obscure corner of the placard.

MR. HALLIDAY.—Yes, my son ; and as I perceive that you are at a loss to know why the announcement is thus modestly made, I will explain to you that it is placed obscurely for a very simple purpose.

ROLLO.—Oh ! yes, I see, papa. It is made to make the people wonder what on earth the picture is intended to advertise, so that they will look at it a long time in order to find out what it is.

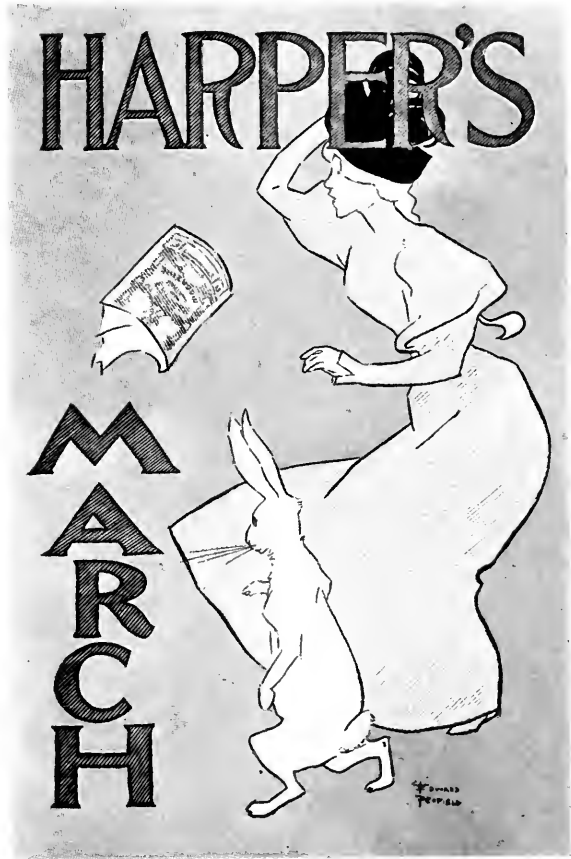
MR. HALLIDAY.—Your supposition is entirely correct, Rollo. This is, indeed, the purpose for which the whole picture is made. By looking carefully, you will observe other points that are care-



DRAWN BY FRANCIS DAY

fully calculated to attract the comments of the curious. It has, you see, accomplished its purpose in having attracted our attention, and held it for a sufficient length of time to impress upon our minds the name of the article it advertises. It is this purpose which the proprietor wishes to effect, and it is for this reason that he has directed his artist to introduce into the costume of the lady—which is not, you will observe, anything of a complicated or extensive character—such a startling combination of colors as shrimp pink, electric blue, yellow green, and two conflicting shades of reddish purple.

ROLLO.—Thank you, father. And if on our return to Beechnutville, in our dear old State of New Hampshire, I



DRAWN BY EDWARD PENFIELD



DRAWN BY WILL CARQUEVILLE

should meet any ladies who exhibit the same symptoms, I shall certainly recommend them to try "Tur-lu-tu-tu" to eradicate ingrowing eyebrows.

How quickly and how thoroughly these lessons were learned by some Americans the illustrations in this article will show. Starting from a lower plane than French art

ever knew, our designers have reached a level of artistic equality with all except the acknowledged masters in this curious line of work in France or elsewhere ; and there are evidences of the natural, healthy, unaffected growth of certain tendencies that must lead to the formation of a distinctively American school. These evidences may seem too clear to my friendly and optimistic eyes ; but I shall present some of them to the readers of this paper, and leave them to judge what ground

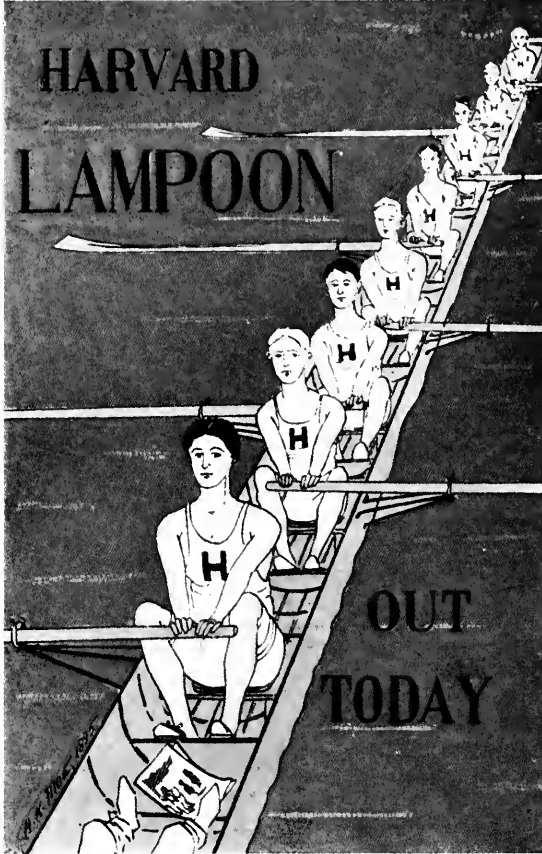
I have for my faith in my own forecast.

But first let me take passing note of the productions of the American poster-makers of the present day as we see them represented in these illustrations. It needs but a glance at the reproductions of the work of to-day that are given in these pages to show that boldness of design and variety and novelty in technical execution have taken the place of the timorous crudity of earlier years. Unquestionably, the fact that most of our artists are still at school is quite apparent. We can forgive this when we see the American artist, consciously or unconsciously, trying to get rid of the little touch of cynical vulgarity that deforms too much of what is otherwise worthy in French art, and to keep for himself the lucid clearness and unsought force and directness of its inspiration.



DRAWN BY GEORGE WHARTON EDWARDS

But imitation is not so readily forgiven when it takes the form of even a conscientious Americanization of a brutal



DRAWN BY A. K. MOE

English parody on the eccentricities of mediæval Florentine art; and it is pleasant to see that the artist who on our side of the water has most conspicuously shown cleverness in this readaptation is growing away from his British model and developing his own characteristic powers, which point him as naturally to lines of beauty as the qualities of the

foreigner urge him to a morbid delight in the contortions of ugliness. How much this means anyone may judge who will set side by side the illustration on page 35, and the one on page 102, and will reflect that it is hardly more than two or three years since

these two artists, one after the other (in both senses of the proposition), started out to do the same sort of work. Development of this sort is to be credited partly to the artist, but in no slight measure to the public that accepts or rejects his work.

It is pleasant to reflect that while all England, from the hopelessly vulgar "middle class" who read Mr. Phil May's publications to the "upper class" who write art criticism, have accepted, and still accept Mr. Aubrey Beardsley in all his offensiveness, the American public has so far kept pace with the progress of American art that once in awhile its foot may even be in the lead.

Mr. Bradley's best work has been done for publishing houses; and it may be stated as a general proposition that art in poster-making has in this country found its best inspiration, in



DRAWN BY LOUIS J. RHEAD

most cases, from literature. This is natural enough ; for this partnership is

a far worthier one than certain people would have us believe, and it has possibilities of production which were undreamed of a few years ago, before the periodical publications of America began to develop the illustrator into a responsible and respectable artist. But if Literature can boast of the largest exhibit of thoroughly good poster work, let it not be forgotten that the American stage has within the last two or

three years made a record for itself that is almost unique. It has long been considered by European commentators on the stage an accepted and established fact that the theatre is the last of all the agencies of art to get hold of an innovation of any sort and put it to practical use. New inventions, popu-

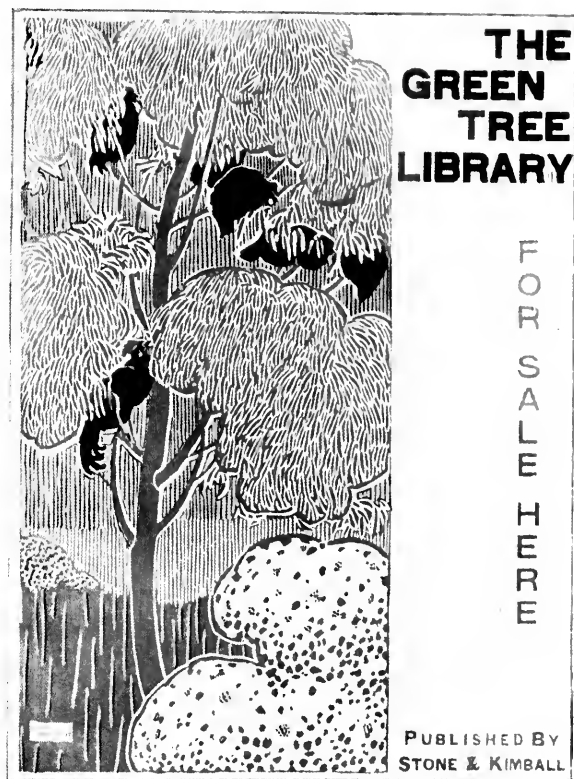
Albert Morris Bagby's NEW NOVEL
MISS TRÄUMEREI.



LAMSON, WOLFFE, & CO 6 BEACON ST. BOSTON.
SOLD HERE PRICE \$1.50

DRAWN BY ETHEL REED

lar crazes, fresh "sensations" of all sorts and varieties, become threadbare topics in the newspapers, at the music-halls, on the streets, and even on the lecture platform, before the unobservant dramatist and the timorous manager undertake to utilize them. The powers of steam and electricity got into the churches before they got into the theatres; and the statistical student of the stage has somewhere recorded the exact number of months (or it may have been years) that it took for the most enterprising of Parisian play-houses to become aware of the existence of the phonograph, and of the possibilities of comedy lurking within it. But those who wish to see how the American theatrical manager "caught onto" the possibilities of the New Poster has only to compare with the best example in this collection the exquisitely clever



DRAWN BY HENRY MCCARTER

and amusing design made last year for Mr. Palmer's theatre (page 103).

As we look back to the rough woodcuts shown on earlier pages of this article, mark the persistence of an ignorant

and pusillanimous tradition in the misuse of lithography (of which a specimen is given on page 83), and realize how far behind the theatrical profession had fallen at a time when even the dullest business man had discovered the advertising value of the artist, it does not seem invidious to pick out this poster and



"CARNIVAL TIME"

DRAWN BY WILL H. BRADLEY FOR THE CHICAGO SUNDAY TRIBUNE

make special mention of its excellence. It is a poster that would take the Blue Ribbon, if it were to be judged on the "points" of artistic poster-making. Let us set down a few of these points—but with no serious attempt to indicate their

relative importance by their position in the list.

It is sufficiently striking to catch the eye.

It is sufficiently attractive to hold the gaze and to invite further inspection.

It conveys its advertisement directly, literally, and pictorially.

It pleases by its humor and ingenuity, and makes the man who sees it talk about it to the next man.

The design is well thought out, and therefore makes people who see it think of it.

It is well drawn.

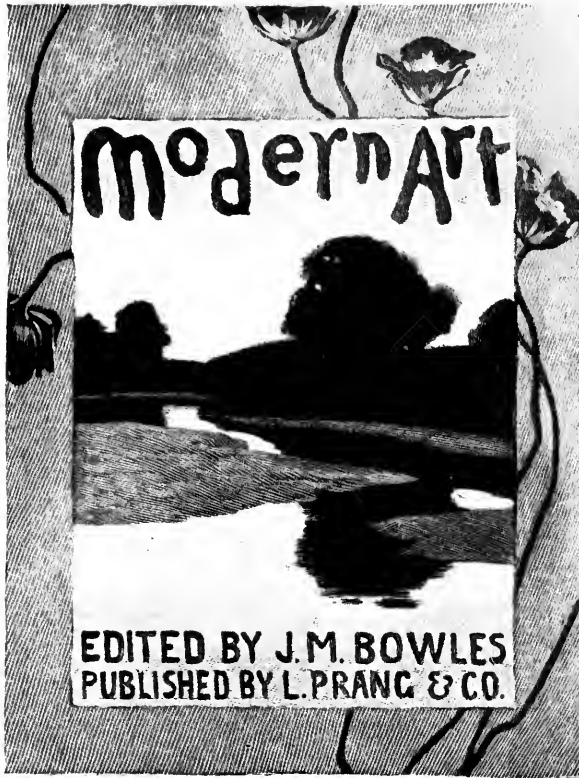
It is well colored.

It is well printed.

These are some of the points by which every poster should be judged; and they are set down here that the impartial reader may apply the test to the examples of recent American art here



AMERICAN REPRINT OF AN ENGLISH POSTER



DRAWN BY ARTHUR W. DOW

reproduced, without suffering any diminution of the admiration which they compel at first glance.

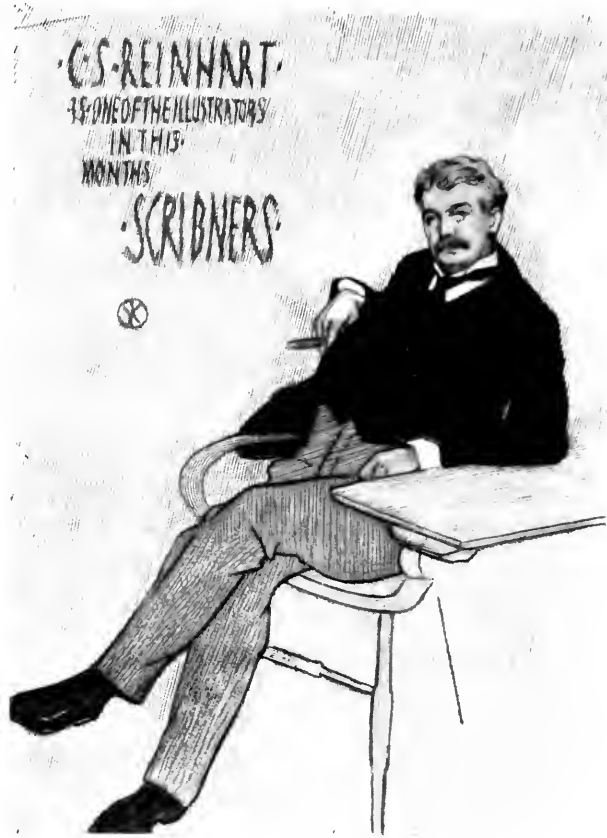
The names attached to the illustrations of this article—I speak, of course, of those of the present day—are principally those of young artists. They represent few bear-

ers of high academic honors. Even where, at starting out, they have availed themselves of foreign sources of inspiration, they have had to strike out for themselves—either to surpass their originals, or to be original for themselves. They have had no help from local tradition or example. Their work as it is shown everywhere to-day does not need to seek a single excuse for itself out of this list of drawbacks.

The posters of France and the posters of England have been well described and amply illustrated in this series and

in many books and magazine articles. In pursuance of a proposition made to the reader a few pages behind this, I will ask him to look over the little group of magazine posters reprinted here, and to ask himself if it would be possible to refer any one of them to a French or English origin.

If I choose, for example, Mr. Penfield's work to rest my case on, and show what I believe to be the growth of a distinctly American idea in this oddest form of art, it is only because the merry conceit of the absurdly mad March Hare gives it the unusual advantage of a touch of humor. In the lightness, freshness and purity of that humor; in the composition, free without license, and unconventional without extravagance; in the striking



DRAWN BY WILLIAM SERGEANT KENDALL
(AS YET UNPUBLISHED)

yet inoffensive use of color ; in the frankness and unaffected innocence and happy simplicity of the whole thing, I find a quality which, I am grateful to think, comes to the American artist—whatever else he may have to learn for himself or earn for himself—as his natural and honest birthright.

IV

ITALIAN POSTERS
AND
MUSIC-BOOK COVERS

AUGUST F. JACCACI



OTHELLO

DRAWN BY V. BIGNAMI

*Italian Posters
and Music-
Book Covers*



HE direct ancestor of the modern poster, the playbill of the last century, which in England and France existed as a mere display of type, was usually embellished in Italy with rococo decoration, and not infrequently also with cuts depicting the chief personages or the culminating scene of the play. The modern poster,

directly evolved from these early forms, assumed its distinctive character much earlier in Italy than in other countries. There, as here in America, it was at first almost exclusively given to the advertising of theatrical productions, but with this difference, that in the latter country it was devoted to plays of all kinds, from tragedies to burlesques, with the single exception of operas, which were infrequently given, and only in a few large cities ; while in Italy, where the opera was the one popular form of histrionic art, and comedies and tragedies rare, operas alone were advertised by posters.

It is curious that early Italian posters (and this is true to a degree of later-day posters) were mainly the productions of the Milan house of Ricordi, which until recently monopolized the publication of the works of the great Italian composers ; so that the Ricordi music-book covers have become familiar to the musical public of the civilized world, though the posters have still but a local publicity.

One can find few things to say in favor of the productions of two decades ago, for it is too evident that they



MUSIC-BOOK COVER

DRAWN BY PURIATI

aimed at little else than the gratification of the popular taste for the pretty. Indeed, that branch of Italian art suffered like its sister branches from having, like them, the purchaser for its ultimate end; and while seeking as its primary object the pleasing of the crowd, art cannot work out its own salvation.

Such men as Chéret, Grasset and Raven Hill, have been the leaders and final conquerors of a public that stood, at the first, arrayed against them, and either unable to understand or reluctant to follow.

The miserable condition of the Italian

peninsula struggling for unity and freedom had, without doubt, a most depressing influence on all branches of the national activities; but there was one cause of abasement that touched art more keenly, and for which the foreigner was mainly responsible. Impoverished Italy was the caravanserie of crowds of Philistines from the world

FALSTAFF

Comédie Lyrique
en 3 actes
par A. BOÏTO
(Musique de)
G. VERDI
Version française
par A. BOÏTO et PAUL SOLANGES

Propriété pour tous pays.

G. RICORDI & C.
ÉDITEURS
PARIS - 12, Rue de Lisbonne, 12 - PARIS
(au coin du Boulevard Malesherbes)

DRAWN BY MORA DA HOHENSTEIN



over, who in exchange for their welcome gold gathered every year harvests of innumerable paintings and sculptures, miscalled works of art, but simply meretricious stuff especially manufactured to please the rich foreigner.

The one excuse Italian artists and art-artisans could make for pandering slavishly to the taste of such patrons, was a sadly effective one ; it was with them a question of eking out a living or dying of hunger. But all this has changed with the tremendous impulse arising from the emancipation of Italy. Since the cherished dream of its patriots, from Petrarch to Mazzini and Cavour, has become a reality, and the members of its great family are reunited in

a home extending unbroken from the Alps to the sea, the resultant beneficial effects are everywhere to be seen.

Art is in a transition period which promises much. The serious import of its mission begins to be deeply felt, and scores of earnest young men give fair promise that the spirit so long somnolent but now thoroughly awakened will assert itself in a continuance of the noble traditions of the great periods. Italians love to think of the present as the dawn of their second Renaissance.

Naturally, that most popular form of modern art, the poster, shows clearly the new ideals. The accomplishment is not yet, perhaps ; but the effort, worthy and strenuous, has already brought forth designs charmingly conceived and executed, and having a solid basis of good composition, adequate drawing and carefully considered effect.

One of the finest examples of the best that as yet has been done is the exquisite cover of G. Sartorio for a song of Ratoli's "La Romanella" (page 115), portraying the figure of a modern Roman maiden gazing over the Piazza del Popolo and Rome.

The characteristic of Italian posters, as

compared with those of other countries, is the quality of charm, the air of things put together easily, gracefully and with tact. At a glance they show an inborn taste and sense of measure that, applied even to minor things, endows them with a something which, though hardly to be dignified by such a word as style, is yet nearly akin to it. It seems as if all manifestations of Italian art were held by threads, slender, perchance, but firm, to the old traditions, and so felt their chastening and regulating influence. The rigidity of tradition is balanced by the salutary restraint of tradition, a powerful antidote for foolish, loosely-conceived experiments. Even in the matter of posters we perceive that Italians come of ancient and aristocratic lineage, and that however degenerate there lingers some reserve, some inherited good breeding. Hence one must not look for a very striking note in them ; they may attempt, but they fail to steal the end-of-the-century thunder, and however original, they have ever an air of *déjà connu*.

Another most salient characteristic of the Italian poster is that the story is told pictorially, as if its makers were



A. Rizzoli
la Romagnella.
parole di G. Turco

Piedigrozza
mcccxcij

CORDIER
mignolo
torta
tortino
tortino

MUSIC-BOOK COVER

DRAWN BY G. A. SARTORIS

convinced that its import could be conveyed as adequately by an image as by words. Italian artists seem unwilling to sacrifice the picture to the big lettering, with us so essential a feature of what after all is nothing but an advertisement. It may be said that with few exceptions Italian posters tell the story without words (page 108), and compared to them, the fantasies of French and English artists are "in the air," so to speak.

Though the result may be the same with the public, there are here two totally different conceptions of the manner in which a poster can best fulfil its mission.

A series of striking, forceful designs in color may rivet the attention, only to discover to the inquiring eye when it peruses the various letterings, that the same dashing, impossible creature advertises alike books, plays, patent medicines. Except for a miniature box of pills, or possibly a cake of soap in a corner, there is no attempt to express the character of the thing advertised. Rather, there is a deliberate enticing of the attention to something quite foreign to the subject. In the

Italian posters the pictures try to convey the import of the subject advertised.

Doubtless the earliest and crudest forms of pictorial advertisements were conceived in that manner ; yet the query arises why should not modern pictorial advertisements possess, aside from their artistic qualities, their charm of color and design, the merit as well of telling what they are about in a manner forceful and ingenious ?

ERRATUM

The poster referred to on page 102, "The New Woman," erroneously credited to an American artist, is an American reprint of an original designed by Albert Morrow, and executed by Messrs. David Allen & Sons, of Belfast, Ireland, for Mr. Comyns Cair, of the Comedy Theatre, London.



DATE DUE

MAY 1 1964	DEC 0 8 2001		
MAY 1 1964	MAY 1 9 1961		
AUG 0 1 1984	JUN 1 2 2006		
AUG 1 1984			
JUL 1 1984	JUL 1 6 2002		
	MAY 0 3 2004		
	MAY 0 3 2004		
MAR 2 5 1986			
MAR 3 1 1986	JAN 2 1 2008		
FEB 2 9 1992	NOV 0 4 2010		
	DEC 0 4 2010		
MAR 0 2 1992			
MAY 0 3 1994	DEC 0 6 2010		
	MAY 0 4 2011		
APR 2 2 1994	MAY 1 1 2011		
JUN 2 1 1997			
JUN 2 4 1997			



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